

# This Old House

**SAVE  
BIG**  
with 28  
DIY tips  
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## 32 low-cost makeovers

5 kitchen remodels

12 paint projects

3 bath updates

7 outdoor ideas

and more

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WONDERS!**

5 spaces,  
5 amazing  
redos

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Cover Photograph by  
DEBORAH WHITLAW LLEWELLYN  
Styling by BRIAN CARTER



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AKURUM kitchen with ÅDEL doors and drawer fronts \$5299 as shown. Clear lacquered solid beech/beech veneer ÅDEL doors/drawer fronts. Requires assembly and installation. \*The total price includes cabinets, fronts, interior shelving, drawer and door dampers, hinges, toe-kicks, legs, visible moldings and panels. Countertops, sink, faucet, handles/knobs, appliances and lighting are sold separately. See **IKEA** store or [IKEA-USA.com](http://IKEA-USA.com) for limited warranty details. Valid in US stores. See **IKEA** store for country of origin information and 10'x10' kitchen layout details.



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One reader hauled out her forgotten picnic table and benches and turned them into the perfect place to pot plants.



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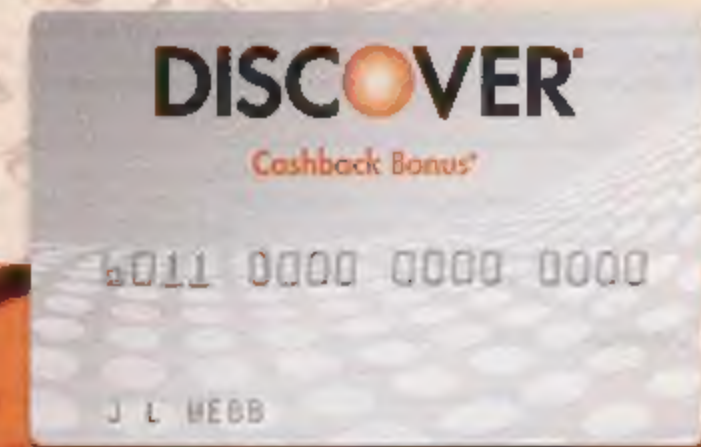
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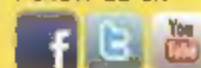


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2011 AIAA  
Ash Viter

# letter {from This Old House}

## Here's to you—the real dream team

"Sorry for the informality of the greeting," Katherine Stewart wrote me, having addressed the letter simply, "Dear Scott."

It was a warm letter, in which she said she felt she knew the people of *This Old House* after reading the magazine and watching the TV show for so many years. In it, she took the time to tell me of the work she'd done on her own home, or had planned to do before life got in the way, and she enclosed a gift of the framed poem you see here. "It certainly reflects my feelings about old houses—especially the one I have," she said, "but I think it should go where more people might see it."

Truth be told, the poem reflects my feelings, too—at least on the days when the plumbing is working, the roof stays sound, and the house doesn't turn on me, in that vaguely sinister way it sometimes does, just to let me know who's really boss.

Katherine's letter was a touching one. Yet her note also made me smile—almost chuckle. A letter writer who concerns herself with being too familiar, whose note arrived smack in the middle of our annual Reader-Created Issue, is a rare one. Not to put too fine a point on it, but most of you folks—well, I can't exactly accuse you of holding back. In fact, hearing from you is a lot like hearing from family, which I guess in some sense you are.

You write us and we learn about marriages, like Sean Agagnina's, who proposed to Heather Long on the first night they spent in their newly rehabbed home. (Their wedding date: June 17.) You write us about breakups, like Christine Reed, who bought a fixer-upper with her contractor-fiancé and is clearly one tough lady—she not only survived their split, she kept the house and finished the remodel herself. (Christine, get yourself an agent; there's a movie starring Sandra Bullock somewhere in your story.)

You write us and we learn about families—the ones that come to lend a hand in your DIY efforts and the ones that happen during them,



*He who loves an old house—  
Never loves in vain.  
How can an old house—  
Used to sun and rain,  
To lilac and to larkspur  
And an elm above—  
Ever fail to answer  
The heart that gives it love?*

J.F. CONANT

PHOTOS: (SCOTT) MICHAEL LEWIS (FRAMED POEM) TED ANDERSON



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## letter { July 2011 }

like husband and wife John Meyers and Lisa Lindberg, whose son was born mid-renovation, while their house still lacked a functioning kitchen.

You write us and we learn, through matter-of-fact, no-bragging-intended stories, how generous you are—like Andrew and Greta Wrigley, who kept their contractor on the job even as he missed work to undergo cancer treatments. Or Angel Fox and her husband, Cory, who unexpectedly became the guardians of her two young twin sisters. Though cash-strapped, Cory and Angel managed to find the strength and a place to make a home for all of them.

Really, what we learn is that *This Old House* readers are an absolutely remarkable group of people. You are creative beyond belief (please see the work of Cheryl Demartini on page 43). You are often startlingly skilled (check out first-time cabinet builder Gregg Alling on page 85). You don't give up: I'm talking about the Rader family, whose home, transformed over the course of 10 years and three renovations, won our Reader Remodel Contest, an honor for which they received \$5,000 and a 2011 GMC Sierra (worth \$50,000!).

In all, you have a common understanding of the importance of roots and family and home, and a perseverance that Tom Brokaw made me believe only my grandmother's generation had. I see now that this gumption—at least for most of the nearly six million readers of *TOH*—is either genetic or contagious or both. Yup, you make us see that even in trying economic times, the American Dream hasn't gone away. It's apparent on every page of this issue, the one you've created. And the best part? It's a dream we don't need to wake up from. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

*Scott Omelianuk*  
SCOTT OMELIANUK, EDITOR  
[scott@thisoldhouse.com](mailto:scott@thisoldhouse.com)



Sean Agagnina & Heather Long



Christine Reed



Lisa Lindberg & John Meyers



Andrew & Greta Wrigley



Angel & Cory Fox



Cheryl Demartini



Gregg Alling

PHOTOS (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) RYAN KURTZ

# CATCH UP WITH THE CREW



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her project really stacks up

# home solutions

Edited by Jessica Dodell Feder

10 USES GENIUS UPGRADES RENO SURVIVAL MORE



→ SMART IDEA

## Picnic table potting bench



WHO > Tarja Varis  
WHERE > Redwood City, Calif.  
WHAT > Made a picnic set into a place to pot plants.

Tired of her old redwood picnic set, *TOH* reader Tarja Varis stuck it in a corner of her yard and forgot about it—until she needed a place to exercise her green thumb. “Stacked on the table, the benches looked like shelves,” she says. To turn the pieces into a bona fide potting bench, she raised the table to a good working height with 2x4s. Then she used old fence boards to add support to the back and sides, and secured the entire structure with deck screws. After priming the bench, Tarja coated it with deck paint in pale yellow and installed hooks for hand tools. Total cost: \$30!

her project really stacks up



# Chopsticks

Even if you'd rather eat with a fork, these simple wood utensils are worth saving. **TOH** reader **Christine Dinus** shares some ways she puts them to use.

## 1 Skewer food.

Don't have enough bamboo skewers at your barbecue? Soak chopsticks in water for 15 minutes, then use them to spear meat and veggies, and place on the grill.

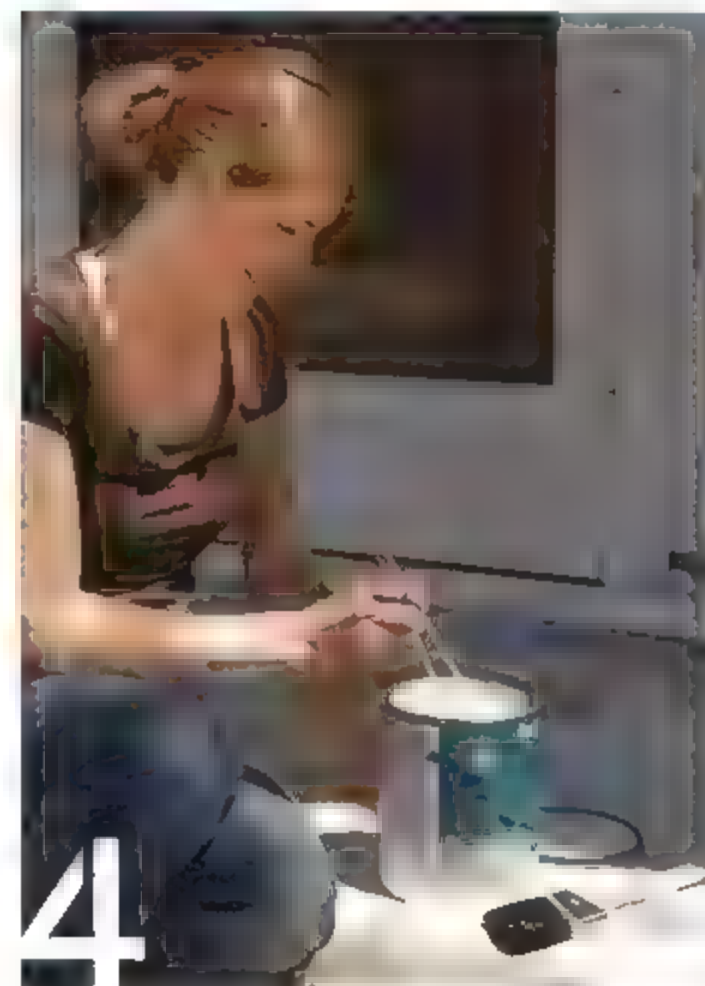
## 2 Prop up plants.

Poke a chopstick into the soil near a spindly seedling to give it some needed support.



## 3 Fill a stripped screw hole.

Dip a chopstick into a little glue and insert into the screw hole. Let dry, then break off the rest of the stick to create a new spot for driving in the screw.



## 4 Stir paint.

Hold chopsticks as you would when eating to "whisk up" paint or stain before applying it.

## 5 Toast marshmallows.

Make the fixings for s'mores by popping a marshmallow onto the end of a chopstick and carefully holding it over a low flame.

## 6 Eliminate dirt in hard-to-reach spots.

Use a chopstick to push a cleaning cloth into the top groove of a paint can.

between air conditioner vents, behind sink faucets, and in other narrow areas.

## 7 Unclog bottles.

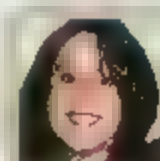
Free up tubes of caulk or bottles of glue by poking the narrower end of a chopstick into the gunked up tip.

## 8 Clean muddy shoes.

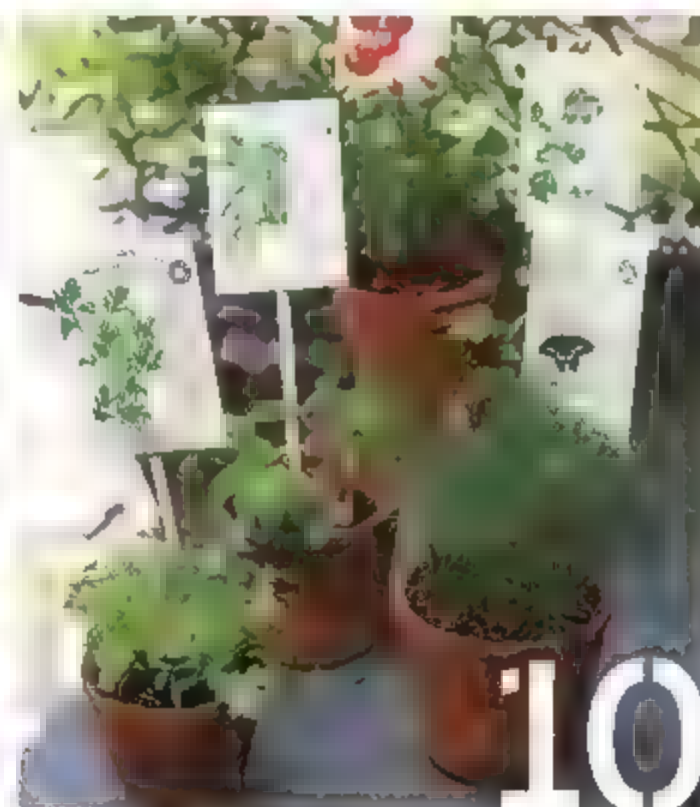
Keep chopsticks by your door and use them to loosen dried dirt or mud from the crevices of shoe soles before stepping inside.

## 9 Prevent oozing mastic.

When tiling, use the tip of a chopstick to help clean up excess mastic that escapes into grout voids.



**WHO** Christine Dinus  
**WHERE** Elmira Heights, N.Y.  
**WHAT** Turns Chinese takeout utensils into household helpers.



## 10 Label your plants.

Create markers by stapling a plant's seed packet to a chopstick and placing it inside the pot or bed.

more 10  
uses

Find clever ideas for leftovers at [thisoldhouse.com/july11](http://thisoldhouse.com/july11)

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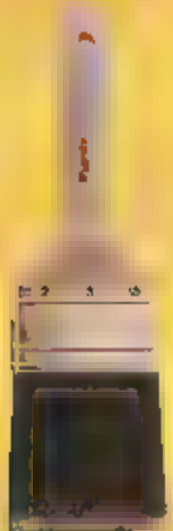
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## STAIR FIX-UP

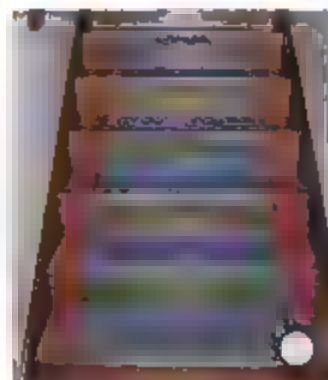
→ INSTANT STYLE

### Easy-to-install stair runner

After getting a quote of \$2,500 to carpet her dangerously slick oak staircase, TOH reader Jaime Shackford took the project into her own hands. Using just two off-the-shelf woven runners (\$124 each) and supplies from a home center, here's what she did.



WHO Jaime Shackford  
WHERE Edmond, Okla.  
WHAT Got a good grip on once-slippery stairs with a DIY runner



**STEP 1** Jaime used painter's tape to make sure the runner would be centered on the stairs.  
**STEP 2** She cut padding—a thin sheet of felt usually sold as underlayment for laminate flooring—into rectangles slightly narrower than the width of the runner.  
**STEP 3** She adhered the padding to the treads with blue double-sided carpet tape, pulling the felt over the nose of each step. Then she added more carpet tape for the runner.  
**STEP 4** Starting from the top, Jaime affixed the runner, securing it with staples in the corners of each tread and along the top and bottom edges. She used a painter's 5-in-1 tool to smooth the runner over the steps' risers and finished it off with square upholstery tacks.

## NEED HELP WITH A PROJECT?



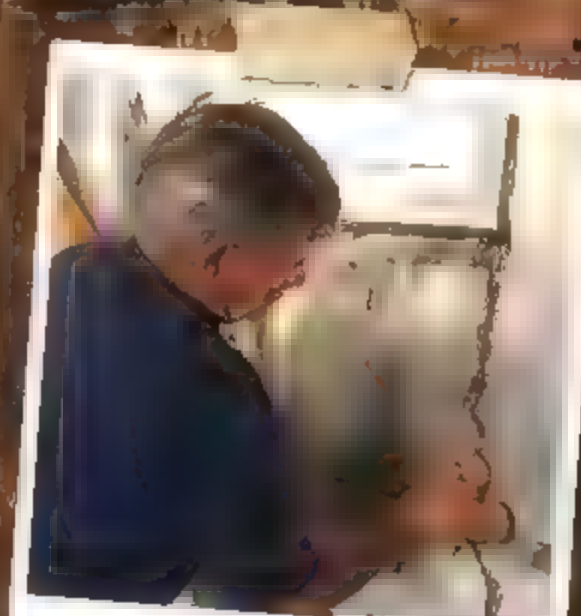
Installing a Bathroom Sink



Building a Deck



Yard Clean-up



Fixing a Foundation Crack



Gutter Downspout Drainage

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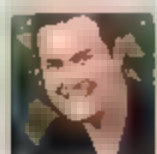




→ UPGRADES

## Little ways you wowed us

They may not require complicated blueprints or cost heaps of cash to make, but these personality-filled projects demonstrate the kind of ingenuity and resourcefulness **TOH** readers impress us with every month.



### Closet-door message board

"My wife and I wanted a chalkboard in the nursery, but wainscot took up most of the wall. This door, with its recessed panels, made the perfect spot. Now we just hope our son has as much fun making his mark on the door as we did."

**Kenchy Ragsdale,**  
Panorama City, Calif.



### Nautical newel post

"I made this lighthouse-inspired newel post from poplar and walnut. To give it a real stic look, I fitted the top with a puck light, which, mounted inside a glass cylinder, helped disperse the glow. The entire project took a month to complete, but the results were worth it."

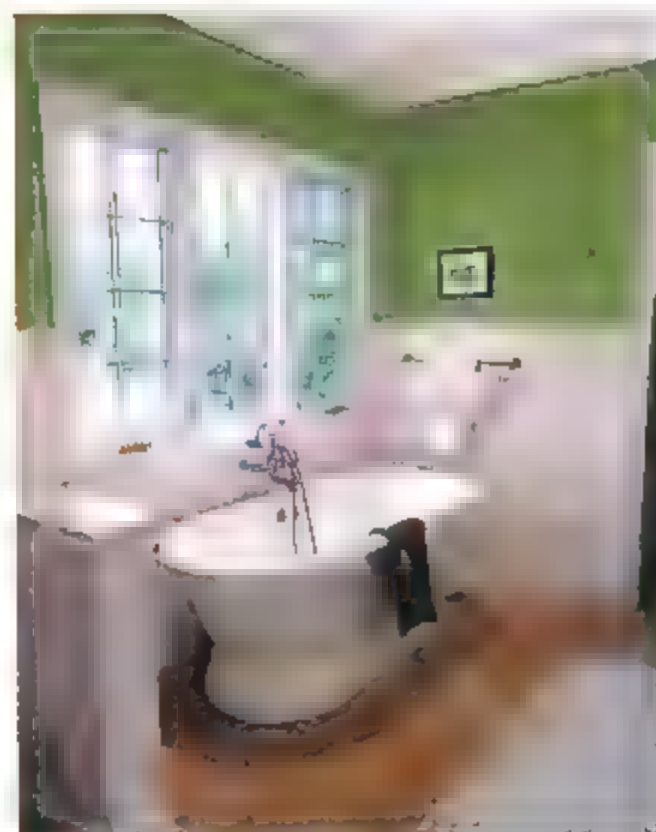
**Luis Gonzales,** Vista, Calif.



### Painted headboard

The blank wall behind our bed looked so bare. I've never liked traditional headboards, so I created one with orange paint. For only \$120, the finishing touch? A stencil I filled in with white paint that brings a bit of nature indoors."

**Ellen Elferling,** New York, N.Y.



### Repurposed wainscot

"The only thing I liked about my 1937 bungalow's porch was the tongue-and-groove ceiling. So when I took it down, I recycled the panels as wainscot in my new bathroom. I'm thrilled that it can still enjoy the wood's weathered charm."

**Lisa Lindberg,**  
Sacramento, Calif.

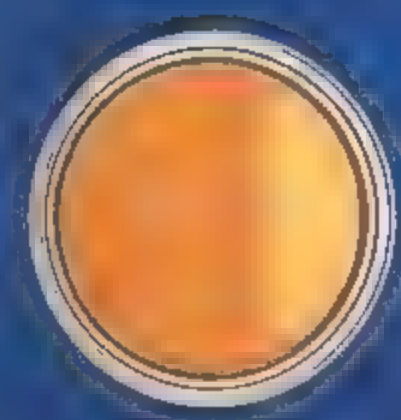
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# Surviving a kitchen renovation

You'd think living without a kitchen for nine months would mean night after night of TV dinners, but a couple of savvy TOH readers cooked up a better plan



**WHO** Alan and Jon Horton  
**WHERE** Yucaipa, Calif.  
**WHAT** Made dinner almost every night without so much as a stove



My contractor husband Alan and I love to cook, but the kitchen in our 1950s ranch could barely fit two people. When we finally decided to remodel, Alan told me I'd be without the space for three months. tops. Was that wishful thinking? The renovation took triple the time. Even so, we rarely ate frozen meals—and we only went out for dinner a few times. Here's what I learned along the way:

**> Make the most of the space you have.** So little room forced me

to think creatively: turned our dining room into a kitchen, hooking up the old fridge and using the dining table and a dresser as countertops. Dry goods were kept in a pasta storage bin. We used the bathroom sink to wash dishes. If that was too small for the job at hand, we cleaned them in a big pot of water.

**> Learn to love the slow cooker.** Though didn't whip up elaborate meals, most were home-cooked. A Crock Pot let me fix dishes like pot

roast chili and chicken Alfredo, and made it possible to keep out on a few pots and pans. I also had a toaster oven, microwave, and electric skillet. We ate a lot of salad and fresh fruit because they were easy to prepare.

**> Going to the grocery? Plan ahead.** Constantly having to think about what could cook with

limited equipment was tough. Even making spaghetti posed a challenge since I couldn't boil a pot of water. I tried it a few nights, but it took ages heating up the water in the microwave, a little at a time. So I wrote shopping lists of foods that worked best for us, like rotisserie chicken, and bought them often.

**> Create a routine—and stick to it.** Most mornings would start dinner before leaving for work. And many weekends would make pancakes or bacon and eggs on the electric skillet. Creating that

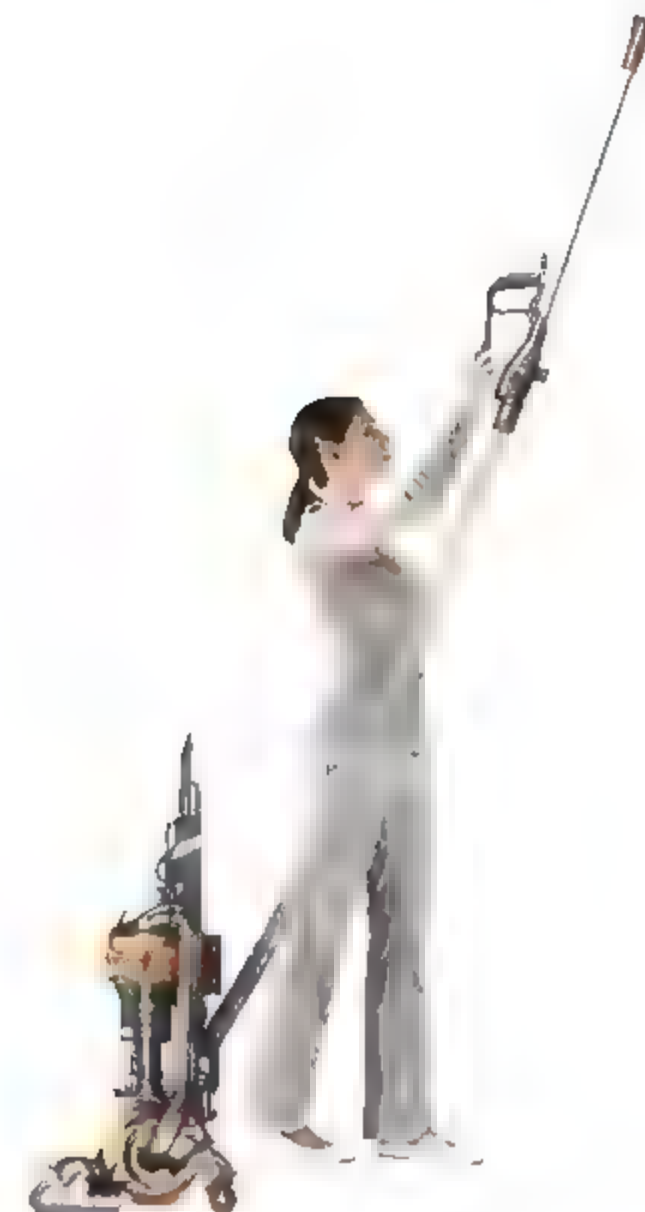
kind of schedule made the time go by much quicker.

**> Take time to have fun.** Believe it or not, we had friends over for dinner and to play cards numerous times. It wasn't fancy and took a lot of energy, but I was amazed that we entertained at all. Spending time with people we cared about helped us forget the awful chaos in the kitchen. Looking back, I also would have made time to go on a vacation once the renovation was complete. I sure needed it! ■

**"Believe it or not, we had friends over for dinner numerous times. It wasn't fancy and took a lot of energy, but it helped us forget the awful chaos in the kitchen."**



**To clean up high with many other vacuums, you have to unwrap the hose, unclip the wand, attach the wand to the hose, then attach the wand extension.**



**A Dyson DC25 wand pulls out in a single action.**

The Dyson DC25 wand pulls out in a single action, reaching up to 15 feet, to the top of the average flight of stairs. Unlike some vacuums, you can carry on cleaning without having to assemble separate parts.

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www.dyson.com/outperforms



# "We wanted our baby's crib to have a view"

LOH reader Stephen Forman  
shows us how

Photographs by MATT WITTMAYER



WHO Stephen Forman, with wife Elizabeth and baby Charlotte  
WHERE Amherst, NY  
WHAT Built an ornate coffered ceiling.

There's nothing like elaborate molding to add character to a room, so as we built our house we added it throughout. We wanted something special for the nursery, and the curved geometric patterns that were painted and plastered on 19th-century ceilings gave me an idea for this unusual coffered ceiling with built-up crown molding. I make millwork for a living and have an extensive workshop, so with the help of computer-assisted design (CAD) software and a computerized router I cut patterns out of MDF to use as bending forms. Then, using the forms and a vacuum press—beats steaming and clamping—I laminated thin pieces of poplar to make four sections with mitered corners. Using a scaffold and braces, I was able to assemble the sections on the nursery ceiling, screwing them into blocking already in place. All told, the project took me about 130 hours. Someday, I'll tell Charlotte all about it! ■



**before** The nursery was a plain white box.  
**after** Stepped trim, a picture rail, and a ceiling with curved coffering give the redone room a whimsical formality enhanced by a calming two-tone paint scheme.



palatial  
digs  
for a little  
darling



↑ The curved ceiling here is made with seven pieces of trim laminated with the help of a 21st-century vacuum press.

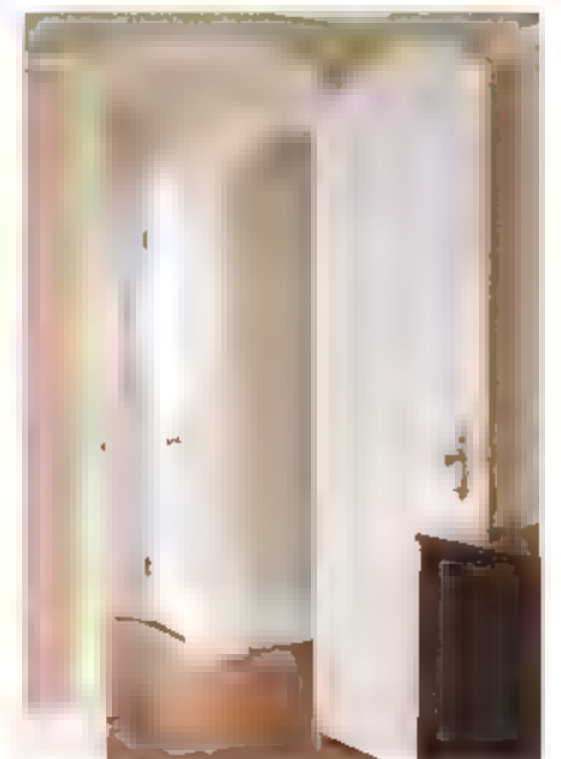
↓ Stepped details on trimers, based on Victorian designs, help make the standard 8-foot ceilings feel loftier.



↑ To ease assembly the curved sections with mitered corners were built in the homeowner's workshop and then installed on the nursery ceiling.



↑ A state-of-the-art workshop in homeowner Stephen Forman's backyard—it's bigger than the house!—enables him to mill custom woodwork for his home.



↑ Arched doorways and a traditional palette add to the new house's old-world flavor. Stephen built the curved door casing used throughout, cutting down standard solid MDF doors to fit.



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## "I built a gateway garden shed"

Using some salvaged materials and a design of his own, TOH reader David Campbell built a great-looking shed for garden storage. BY SAL VAGLICA



WHO David Campbell

WHERE Tolland, Conn.

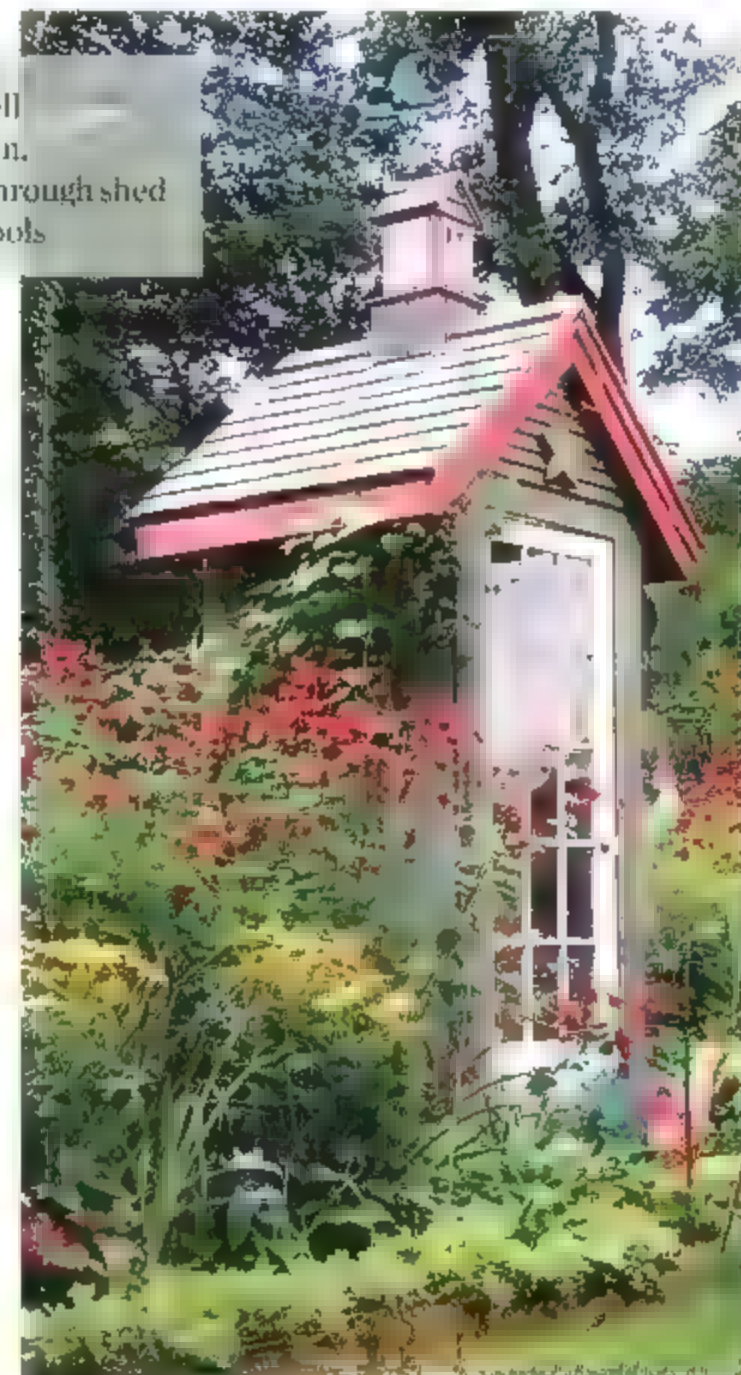
WHAT Built a walk-through shed to store gardening tools

David Campbell's honey do list grew after his then fiancée Janice saw a garden shed she liked in a magazine. She wanted one to keep gardening tools close by. No problem for David, who's been doing remodeling projects since his shop class days. He knew that with a few custom touches he could build a shed that would be really special. And it would be a great gift for her birthday, a few months away.

"The shed she pointed to was very basic," he says. "But I decided to add a second door so that you could pass through it, like a gate, going from our flower garden into our vegetable garden. All I'd have to do was move a few plants to clear some space." After buying a salvaged divided light door (\$80) and a stained-glass window (\$45) at an antiques store, he started designing the 42 by 44 inch shed.

David chose vertical plywood siding—stained gray, with red trim—a cedar-shake roof, and a windowed cupola to suit the cottage style garden. The floor is made from square spindles spaced so that dirt falls through. A fold-down bench provides a perch for Janice to change shoes. Gardening tools fit into notched blocks on the walls.

The finished result is better than Janice ever could have expected. "Friends have asked me to build another one, but this one is too special to replicate," says David. ■



ABOVE David Campbell's shed gets its weathered look from gray stain and its charm from a divided light door found at an antiques shop.

ABOVE RIGHT The stained glass window is surrounded by tool storage niches. RIGHT David's design includes a shoe-changing bench, which folds up and out of the way, and a door he built from pine boards.



garden  
ideas

what  
a great  
birthday  
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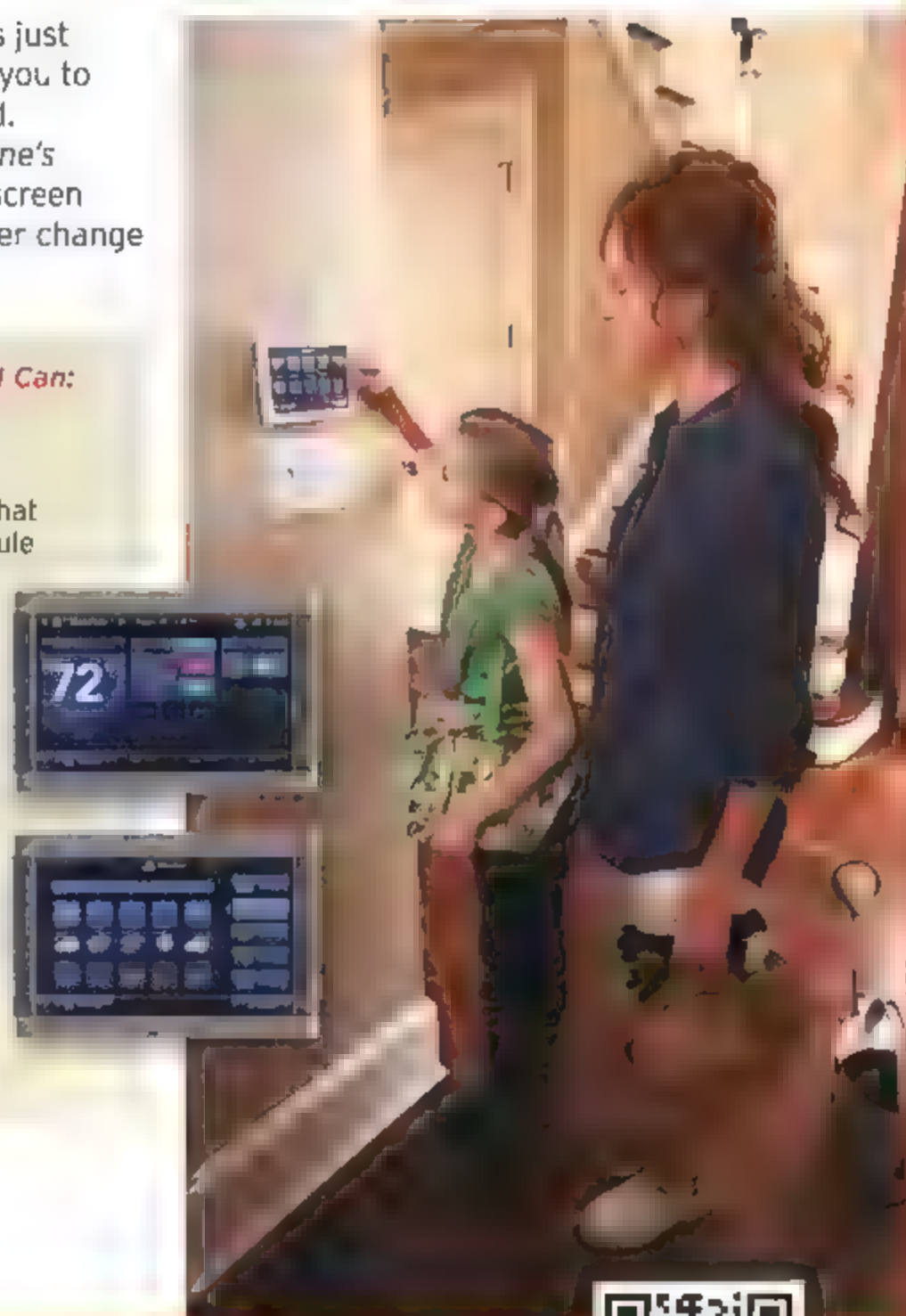
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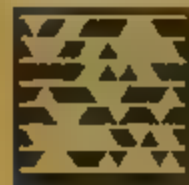
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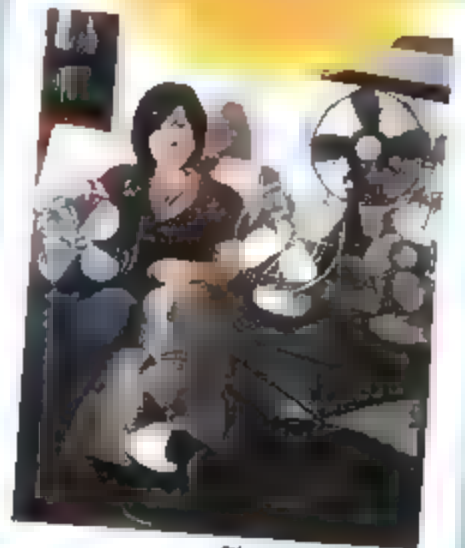
## "Vintage fans add character to any corner"

New and old here are 14 of the best makers to help you be a retrolect—a style

By DANIELLE BLUNDELL + Photographs by TED MORRISON

TOH reader Christine Costa accents her grandmother's antique desk with an old three-blade GE fan that still spins and a mid-century dime-store model that's just for show. Three more vintage fans are placed around her home, adding charm to shelves and tabletops in her kitchen, living room, and garage workshop. Whether collectible originals like Christine's or old school replicas updated with finger-safe grills and modern wiring, vintage-style fans take some of the sweat out of summer without sacrificing style. Coming up here and on the following pages: some of our favorite retro-look powerhouses.

she found  
a cool way  
to keep  
cool



Christine Costa



### authentic oldie

WESTINGHOUSE

Made of: Steel coated with black enamel

Size: 9"W x 12"H

Try it: If you want the real deal, circa 1917, fully refurbished, cleaned, and ready to plug in. Since there's no safety grill, be sure to place it away from little fingers. \$150 (other vintage models also available); [vintagelightingandfanshoppe.com](http://vintagelightingandfanshoppe.com)

### handsome accent

FAN MATION

Made of: Steel with a bronze finish and walnut stained wood legs

Size: 14½"W x 43½"H

Try it: In a den, where the tripod-legged, five-blade beauty will serve as a piece of functional art. \$314, [lumens.com](http://lumens.com)

### bronze basic

HUNTER FAN

Made of: Aluminum with a bronze finish

Size: 13½"W x 16½"H

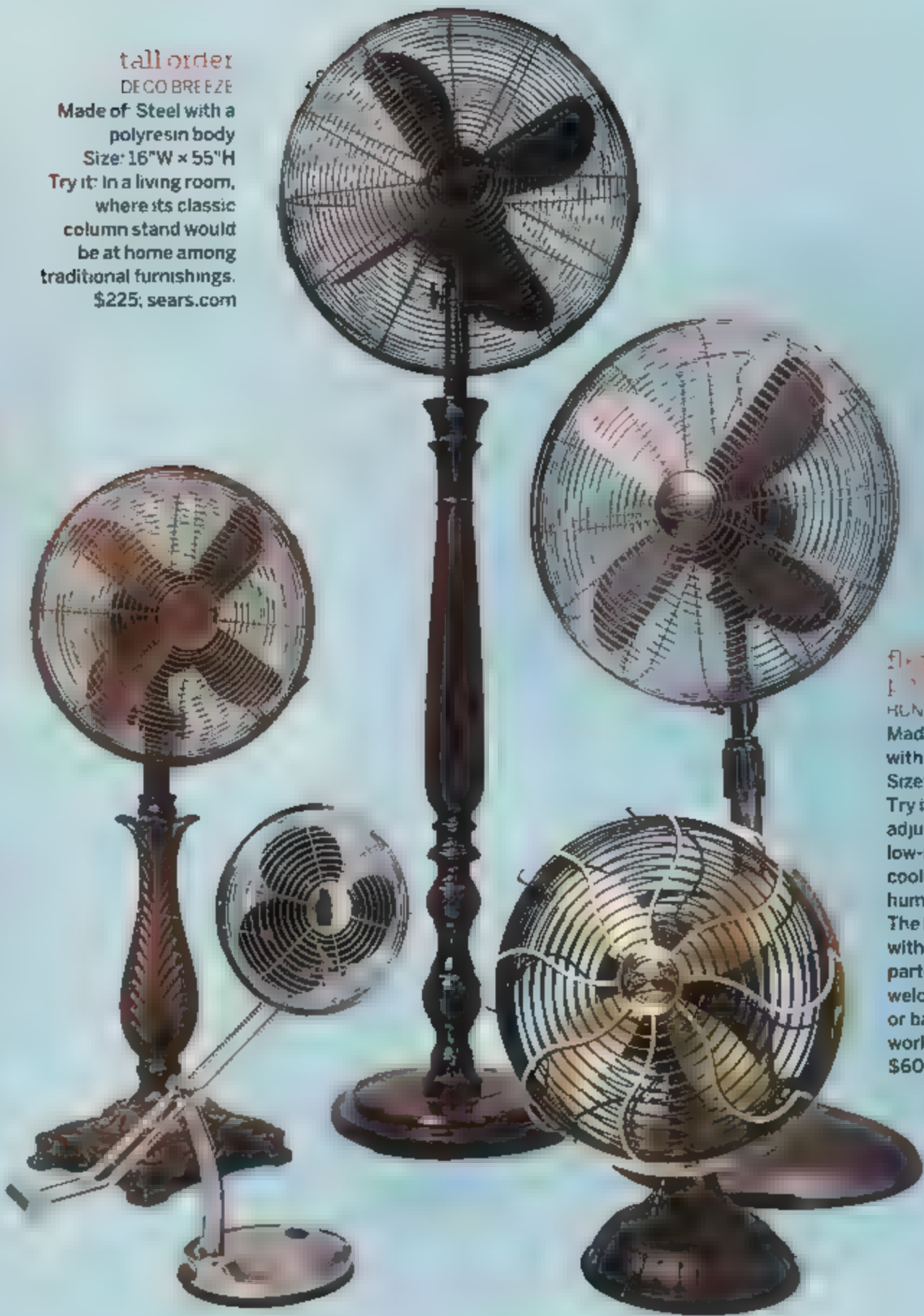
Try it: Just about anywhere. A handsome, oil-rubbed sheen softens the industrial look of this substantial three-speed model. \$50, [target.com](http://target.com)



**tall order**  
DECO BREEZE  
Made of: Steel with a polyresin body  
Size: 16"W x 55"H  
Try it: In a living room, where its classic column stand would be at home among traditional furnishings.  
\$225; sears.com

**ornate oscillator**  
DECO BREEZE  
Made of: Steel with a polyresin body  
Size: 12"W x 30"H  
Try it: In a den or study with an old-world feel, where its rococo-inspired flourishes would fit in and its whisper-quiet motor won't disturb TV watching.  
\$150; bellacor.com

**tabletop tilter**  
DECO BREEZE  
Made of: Steel with a brushed-silver finish  
Size: 6"W x 20"H  
Try it: On a desk or bedside table. The architect-style arm adjusts like a lamp for a gentle, directional breeze.  
\$57; organize.com



**hunter**  
HUNTER FAN  
Made of: Aluminum with a bronze finish  
Size: 18½"W x 24"H  
Try it: For height-adjustable, low-maintenance cooling in high-humidity spaces. The blades, treated with dust-repelling particles, would be welcome in a garage or basement workshop.  
\$60; target.com

**golden grill**  
CASABLANCA FAN COMPANY  
Made of: Steel and zinc with a matte-black base and satin-brass-finished blades  
Size: 13½"W x 16½"H  
Try it: For a powerful blast of air that packs spot-on period style. Three speeds and a broad, oscillating sweep usher this 1920s-inspired number into the 21st century.  
\$239; csnstores.com

**wooded in**  
DECO BREEZE  
Made of: Steel with a stained Asian hardwood frame  
Size: 11"W x 10"H  
Try it: To bring a touch of sophistication to your workspace, wall-hung or resting on a desk.  
\$140 for two; csnstores.com

**deco lines**  
FANIMATION  
Made of: Steel with a zinc base and a satin-nickel finish  
Size: 12½"W x 15½"H  
Try it: As a whimsical tabletop note. Or mount the stepped-up base directly to the wall with the included hardware.  
\$269; searchlighting.com



**colorful cooler**  
MINKA AIRE  
Made of: Steel coated with a blue (or red) enamel finish  
Size: 11½"W x 14½"H  
Try it: Deskside to generate a summer breeze in style.  
\$50; csnstores.com

**steek and simple**  
ECCO  
Made of: Steel and aluminum with a black enamel finish  
Size: 9"W x 12"H  
Try it: In a family room, where its atomic-style grill will jazz up a bookshelf.  
\$72; historichouseparts.com

**mod to rich**  
DECO BREEZE  
Made of: Steel coated with a burnt-orange enamel finish  
Size: 10"W x 12½"H  
Try it: For a fun shot of bold color and retro charm in a kitchen or kid's bedroom. This two-speed, footed model also comes in 10 other colors.  
\$69; thecompanystore.com

**walling globe**  
FAN MATRON  
Made of: Steel with a zinc base covered in a burgundy faux leather  
Size: 9"W x 20"H  
Try it: At the office, where this banker's fan will blow circles around the competition, rotating 360 degrees without rustling a paper.  
\$205; lightingdirect.com



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You may have to rethink the way you treat your pain. You might be used to taking pain medications only after you feel your chronic osteoarthritis pain getting worse. Managing this pain with Cymbalta is a little different. It's important to take Cymbalta every day, as prescribed by your doctor, to manage your pain over time.

Visit [cymbalta.com](http://cymbalta.com) or call 1-877-CYMBALTA (1-877-296-2258) to learn more. Ask your doctor about Cymbalta.

Cymbalta is a prescription medication approved for the management of chronic musculoskeletal pain in people with chronic osteoarthritis pain.

#### Important Safety Information About Cymbalta The most important information you should know about Cymbalta:

Antidepressants can increase suicidal thoughts and behaviors in children, teens, and young adults. Suicide is a known risk of depression and some other psychiatric disorders. Call your doctor right away if you have new or worsening depression symptoms, unusual changes in behavior, or thoughts of suicide. Be especially observant within the first few months of treatment or after a change in dose. Approved only for adults 18 and over.

#### Cymbalta® (duloxetine HCl) is not for everyone.

##### Do not take Cymbalta if you:

- have recently taken a type of antidepressant called a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) or Mefenazine (thioridazine)
- have uncontrolled narrow-angle glaucoma (increased eye pressure)

##### Talk with your healthcare provider:

- about all your medical conditions, including kidney or liver problems, glaucoma, diabetes, seizures, or if you have bipolar disorder. Cymbalta may worsen a type of glaucoma or diabetes.
- if you have itching, right upper belly pain, dark urine, yellow skin/eyes, or unexplained flu-like symptoms while taking Cymbalta, which may be signs of liver problems. Severe liver problems, sometimes fatal, have been reported.

#### Important Safety Information (continued)

- about your alcohol use
- about all your medicines, including those for migraine, to address a potentially life-threatening condition. Symptoms may include high fever, confusion, and stiff muscles.
- if you are taking NSAID pain relievers, aspirin, or blood thinners. Use with Cymbalta may increase bleeding risk.
- before stopping Cymbalta or changing your dose.
- if you experience dizziness or fainting upon standing while taking Cymbalta. This tends to occur in the first week or when increasing the dose, but may occur at any time during treatment.
- about your blood pressure. Cymbalta can increase your blood pressure. Your healthcare provider should check your blood pressure prior to and while taking Cymbalta.
- if you experience headache, weakness, confusion, problems concentrating, memory problems, or feel unsteady while taking Cymbalta, which may be signs of low sodium levels.
- if you develop problems with urine flow while taking Cymbalta.
- if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant during therapy, or are breast-feeding.

#### Most common side effects of Cymbalta

##### (this is not a complete list):

- nausea, dry mouth, sleepiness, fatigue, constipation, dizziness, decreased appetite, and increased sweating.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch), or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

#### Other safety information about Cymbalta:

- Cymbalta may cause sleepiness and dizziness. Until you know how Cymbalta affects you, you should not drive a car or operate hazardous machinery.
- People age 65 and older who took Cymbalta reported more falls, some resulting in serious injuries.

#### How to take Cymbalta:

Take Cymbalta exactly as directed by your healthcare provider. Cymbalta should be taken by mouth. Do not open, break, or chew capsule; it must be swallowed whole. Cymbalta can be taken with or without food.

DD CON-A SI 21APR11

See back page for additional information about Cymbalta, including Boxed Warning about antidepressants and risk of suicide.

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## Information For Patients About Cymbalta

Please read this information carefully before you, or your family member start taking Cymbalta (sim-BALL-tah) and each time your prescription is refilled, in case anything has changed or new information has become available. This information is not meant to take the place of discussions with your healthcare provider. Talk with your healthcare provider or pharmacist if there is something you do not understand or if you want to learn more about Cymbalta. Always follow your healthcare provider's instructions for taking Cymbalta.

What is the most important information I should know about Cymbalta?

**Warning:** In clinical studies, antidepressants increased the risk of suicidal thinking and behavior in children, adolescents, and young adults with depression and other psychiatric disorders. Anyone considering the use of Cymbalta or any other antidepressant must balance this risk with the clinical need. Short-term studies did not show an increase in the risk of suicidal thinking or behavior with antidepressants in adults older than 24, there was a reduction in risk with antidepressants in adults 65 and older. Suicide is a known risk of depression and some other psychiatric disorders. All patients starting antidepressant therapy should be monitored appropriately and observed closely. Families and caregivers should discuss with the healthcare provider right away any observations of worsening depression symptoms, suicidal thinking and behavior, or unusual changes in behavior. Cymbalta is not approved for use in patients under age 18.

Patients on antidepressants and their families or caregivers should watch for new or worsening depression symptoms, unusual changes in behavior, and thoughts of suicide, as well as for anxiety, agitation, panic attacks, difficulty sleeping, irritability, hostility, aggressiveness, impulsivity, restlessness, or extreme hyperactivity. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have thoughts of suicide or if any of these symptoms is severe or occurs suddenly. Be especially observant with in the first few months of treatment or whenever there is a change in dose.

What is Cymbalta?

Cymbalta is a prescription medicine that is approved to treat multiple conditions. Cymbalta is approved for the treatment of major depressive disorder (MDD), a so-called depression, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), the management of fibromyalgia (FM), the management of diabetic peripheral neuropathic pain, a so-called diabetic nerve pain (DNP), and the management of chronic musculoskeletal pain due to chronic osteoarthritis and chronic low back pain.

Who should NOT take Cymbalta?

You should not take Cymbalta if:

- You are taking a type of antidepressant known as a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) such as Nardil® (phenelzine sulfate), Parnate® (tranylcypromine sulfate), or Emsam® (selegiline transdermal system). Using an MAOI with many prescription medicines, including Cymbalta, can cause serious or even life-threatening reactions. You must wait at least 14 days after you have stopped taking an MAOI before you

take Cymbalta. You need to wait at least 5 days after you stop taking Cymbalta before you take an MAOI.

- You have uncontrolled narrow-angle glaucoma (increased eye pressure)
- You are taking an antipsychotic medicine known as Mellaril® (thioridazine)

What should I talk to my healthcare provider about?

Talk with your healthcare provider:

- About any medical conditions you may have, including kidney or liver problems, glaucoma, diabetes, seizures, or if you have bipolar disorder. Cymbalta may worsen a type of glaucoma or the control of blood sugar in some patients with diabetes.
- If you have itching, night upper belly pain, dark urine, yellow skin, eyes, or unexplained flu-like symptoms while taking Cymbalta, which may be signs of liver problems. Severe liver problems, sometimes fatal, have been reported.
- About your alcohol use.
- If you are taking or plan to take any prescription or nonprescription medicines, as Cymbalta may interact with some of these products.
- If you take medications known as triptans, commonly prescribed for migraines. A potentially life-threatening condition may occur when triptans are used with Cymbalta. Symptoms may include high fever, confusion, and stiff muscles.
- If you take NSAID pain relievers, aspirin, or blood thinners, as these medications may increase risk of bleeding when used with Cymbalta.
- Before stopping Cymbalta or changing your dose. Stopping Cymbalta may result in symptoms including dizziness, nausea, or headache (not a complete list). Your healthcare provider may wish to decrease the dose slowly.
- If you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breastfeeding.
- If you experience dizziness or fainting upon standing while taking Cymbalta. This tends to occur in the first week or when increasing the dose, but may occur at any time during treatment, or when used in combination with certain other drugs.
- About your blood pressure. Cymbalta can increase your blood pressure. Your healthcare provider should check your blood pressure prior to and while taking Cymbalta.
- If you experience headache, weakness, confusion, problems concentrating, memory problems, or feel unsteady while taking Cymbalta, which may be signs of low sodium levels.
- If you develop problems with urine flow while taking Cymbalta.

What should I avoid while taking Cymbalta?

- Cymbalta may cause sleepiness and dizziness. Until you know how Cymbalta affects you, you should not drive a car or operate hazardous machinery.

What are the most common side effects of Cymbalta?

- In clinical studies for approved indications (depression, generalized anxiety disorder, diabetic nerve pain, fibromyalgia, and chronic musculoskeletal pain including chronic pain due to osteoarthritis and chronic low back pain), the most common

side effect was nausea.

- Other common side effects included dry mouth, sleepiness, fatigue, constipation, dizziness, decreased appetite, and increased sweating.

This is not a complete list of side effects. See Boxed Warning "Who should NOT take Cymbalta?" and "What should I talk to my healthcare provider about?" See full prescribing information at [www.cymbalta.com](http://www.cymbalta.com). Talk to your healthcare provider if you have questions or develop any side effects. You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch), or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

What else should I know if I'm 65 or older?

- People age 65 and older who took Cymbalta reported more falls, some resulting in serious injuries.

What should I do if I think I have taken an overdose of Cymbalta?

If you have taken more Cymbalta than has been prescribed for you, contact your healthcare provider, a hospital emergency department, or the nearest poison control center immediately.

How should I take Cymbalta?

- Take Cymbalta exactly as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Cymbalta should be taken by mouth. Do not open, break, or chew the capsule; it must be swallowed whole.
- Cymbalta can be taken with or without food.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and take only your regularly scheduled dose. Do not take more than the daily amount of Cymbalta that has been prescribed for you.
- Remember to refill your prescription before you run out of Cymbalta.
- Talk with your healthcare provider before stopping Cymbalta or changing your dose.

General advice about Cymbalta:

- Store Cymbalta at room temperature and out of the reach of children.
- Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than the ones listed. This medication has been prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for another condition or give this drug to anyone else.
- If you have any questions or concerns, want to report any problems with the use of Cymbalta, or want more information, contact your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

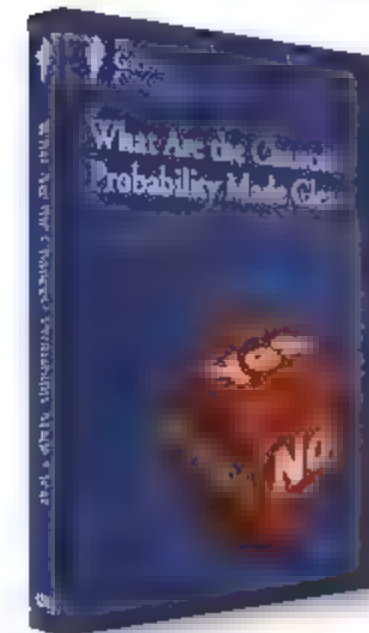
Additional information can be found at [www.cymbalta.com](http://www.cymbalta.com).

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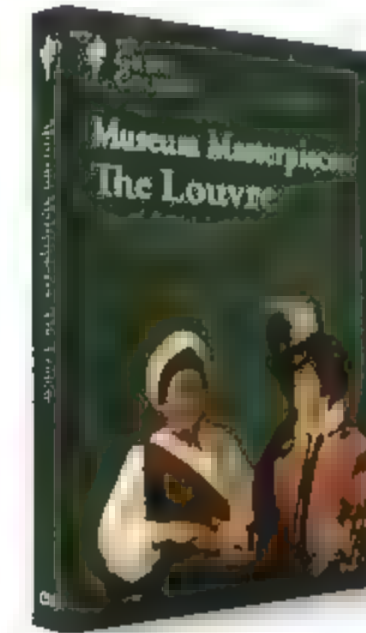
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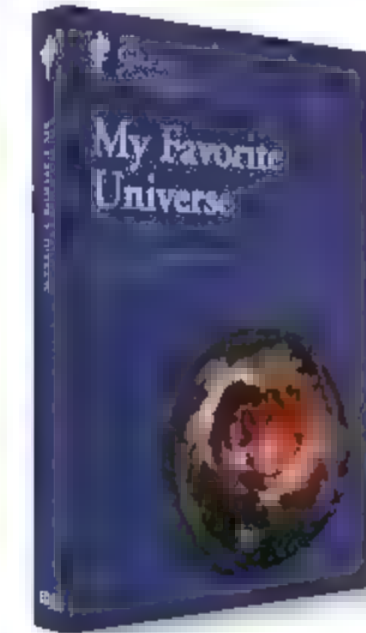
**In What Are the Chances? Probability Made Clear**, award-winning Professor Michael Starbird helps you understand the fundamental concepts and fascinating applications of probability. By picking intriguing, useful, and entertaining examples, he makes probability come alive.

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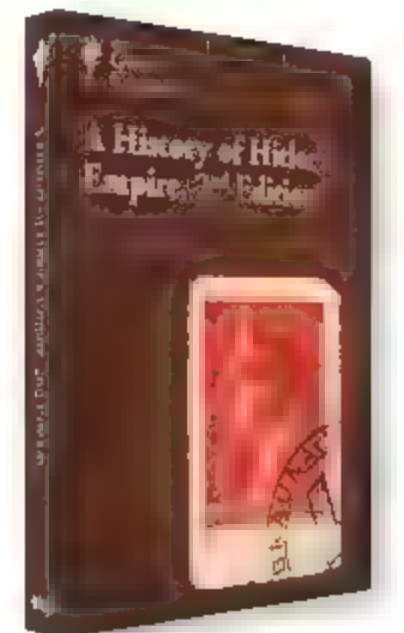
**In Museum Masterpieces: The Louvre**, expert art critic and historian Professor Richard Brettell takes you on an unforgettable journey through one of the world's greatest museums. This 12-lecture series explores some of the most beautiful and renowned examples from the museum's remarkable collection of masterworks.

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12 Lectures  
(30 Minutes/Lecture)



**In A History of Hitler's Empire, 2nd Edition**, award-winning, Ivy League Professor Thomas Childers explains how a man like Adolf Hitler could come to power in a developed country with a highly educated population, and how he could hurl the entire world into a devastating war that would consume millions of lives.

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# "We went Craftsman crazy"

TOH readers Dan and Joann Sundstrom took design cues from Gustav Stickley to create this inviting dining room. Here's how to assemble a similar look in your home.

By JESSICA DODELL FEDER Photograph by RAY KACHATORIAN



**WHO** Joann and Dan Sundstrom  
**WHERE** Lakewood, Calif.  
**WHAT** Gave a once nondescript space handcrafted charm

Intent on adding more warmth to their California home, Dan and Joann Sundstrom turned to the Craftsman movement for inspiration. No wonder: With its emphasis on sturdy, down-to-earth design, the style makes any space cozy. In the couple's dining room, this comes through via leather-accented seating and a plush William Morris pattern rug, saffron-hued walls and a Tiffany-style pendant lamp (a yard sale steal, at only \$10) lend the room a golden glow. But the main attraction is the 7½-foot-long table that Dan, an avid woodworker, built from quarter sawn white oak. "I picked up the design from a book of Stickley furniture plans," he says. He also made the room's molding and picture frames. Inspired? Here's how to create a similarly welcoming space. ■

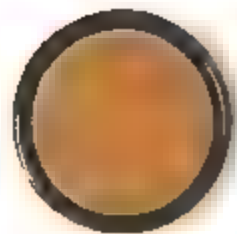
## art tile

Thanks to its dramatic look, this ceramic square is meant for the spotlight. A custom frame offers even more impact. \$58 (without frame); [motawi.com](http://motawi.com)



## gold-hued paint

Dress up walls with a deep, earthy yellow. Duration Home Interior Latex in Saffron Thread, \$34 per gallon; [sherwin-williams.com](http://sherwin-williams.com)



## tiffany-style pendant

Brighten a room with dark wood by hanging a stained-glass lamp with a nature-inspired motif—a hallmark of the Arts and Crafts movement. \$179; [homedecorators.com](http://homedecorators.com)



his pieces  
mimic  
the  
master's

## hand-thrown pottery

Approximate the homeowner's collection of Weller and Roseville vases with these hand-thrown vessels, available in yellow, eggplant, blue, and green. Tall, \$68, and short, \$56; [doorpottery.com](http://doorpottery.com)



## trestle table

Built by Amish craftsmen, this oak version with a Mission-style base echoes the strong lines of the homeowner's handmade table. \$939; [amishdirectfurniture.com](http://amishdirectfurniture.com)



## tapestry rug

The handsome pattern on this New Zealand wool carpet was created by famed Arts and Crafts designer William Morris. 8-by-10-foot rug. \$2,960; [persiancarpet.com](http://persiancarpet.com)



## rustic tableware

Serve meals in style on ceramic plates in organic shapes. Silver-plated utensils offer a refined take on branches. Dinnerware, \$30 for a four-piece setting; [crateandbarrel.com](http://crateandbarrel.com). Flatware, \$89 for a five-piece setting; [michaelsaram.com](http://michaelsaram.com). Tray, \$23; [worldmarket.com](http://worldmarket.com)





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paint  
ideas

## "I created a garden of delights"

Illustrator, architect, and TOH reader Annmarie McCarthy daydreamed about dragonflies. Then she found the perfect canvas—over the baby's crib.

make  
magic  
with paint  
markers

an idea  
takes flight  
Annmarie, with  
Charlotte, 2,  
RIGHT, used paint  
markers to create  
the mural and  
decorate the shelf  
and dresser.  
BELOW.



WHO: Annmarie McCarthy  
WHERE: Chappaqua, N.Y.  
WHAT: Painted a mural, shelf, and dresser in her baby's room.

When our first child came along, I had to give up my studio, which I'd painted a rich pumpkin orange. That color [Benjamin Moore's Autumn Cover] became a backdrop for a mural designed around dragonflies, which I've

always loved. Before applying pencil or paint to the wall, I practiced on a shelf my father-in-law made and on a plain IKEA dresser that my husband, Mark, topped with a changing table. I started with a base coat of pale green, and every day I'd add a color or pattern. That's when I discovered acrylic paint markers, which are similar to felt-tip markers but the color is truly opaque. To soften the blossoms in my mural, I used a stippling motion, allowing a bit of the base coat to show through. It can feel awkward to work with markers on a vertical surface, but at least you don't have to stop to reload a brush, and soon my garden came to life. Then all it needed was a clear coat so that it could stand up to time—and small fingerprints. ■



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salvage  
style

## "I make new stuff from old things"

TOH reader Cheryl Demartini shares how she turns salvage goods like barn boards and bare wire into one-of-a-kind furnishings.

By AMY R. HUGHES Photographs by BETH PERKINS

from  
trash to  
furniture  
treasures



WHO> Cheryl Demartini

WHERE> Ramsey, N.J.

WHAT> Builds tables, cabinets, and more from vintage finds.

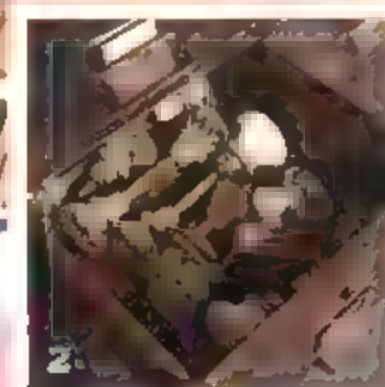
Cheryl Demartini, who was practically reared on *TOH*, turned her junking hobby into a budding business when she was just 18 years old.

It started with discarded dining chairs that she rebuilt and freshened up by painting scenes on the backs. A shop owner offered to display them, and within a week she'd sold five. "I was a student working at a deli. And then all of a sudden I was like, 'Forget buttering bagels, I'm making \$100 a chair,'" says Cheryl.

I laughed when she told me this. There we were, 13 years later, in Cheryl's garage workshop, two junkers from Jersey sharing how we got our start. I'd decided to visit Cheryl's workshop after she e-mailed me photos of her recent work to consider for our Reader-Created Issue. She incorporated old doors and tin ceiling tiles into farm tables and paneled cabinets. I had to see her in action and hear her story.

Cheryl started learning carpentry from her dad when she was 6 years old. "I showed him a picture of a birdhouse and asked if he'd help me make it." Her affinity for working with architectural details also came early, developed while inventorying moldings, doors, and windows at her family's lumberyard.

After getting her college degree in fine arts, Cheryl made a go of the furniture business full time. She



touring Cheryl's workshop

(1) Cheryl shows me how she'll cover the panels in an entry door she plans to use as a tabletop. (2) Old doorknobs that she repurposes as coat-rack hooks. (3) Cheryl pulls out a tin ceiling tile stored in a carport beside her shop.



sold most of her creations via word of mouth. And what didn't sell often got kicked to the curb to make room for new projects.

It was one of those very cast-offs—a reworked armoire—that helped Cheryl find a bigger market for her designs. The woman who'd trash-picked it was opening a store specializing in rustic housewares, and she asked Cheryl to supply all the furniture.

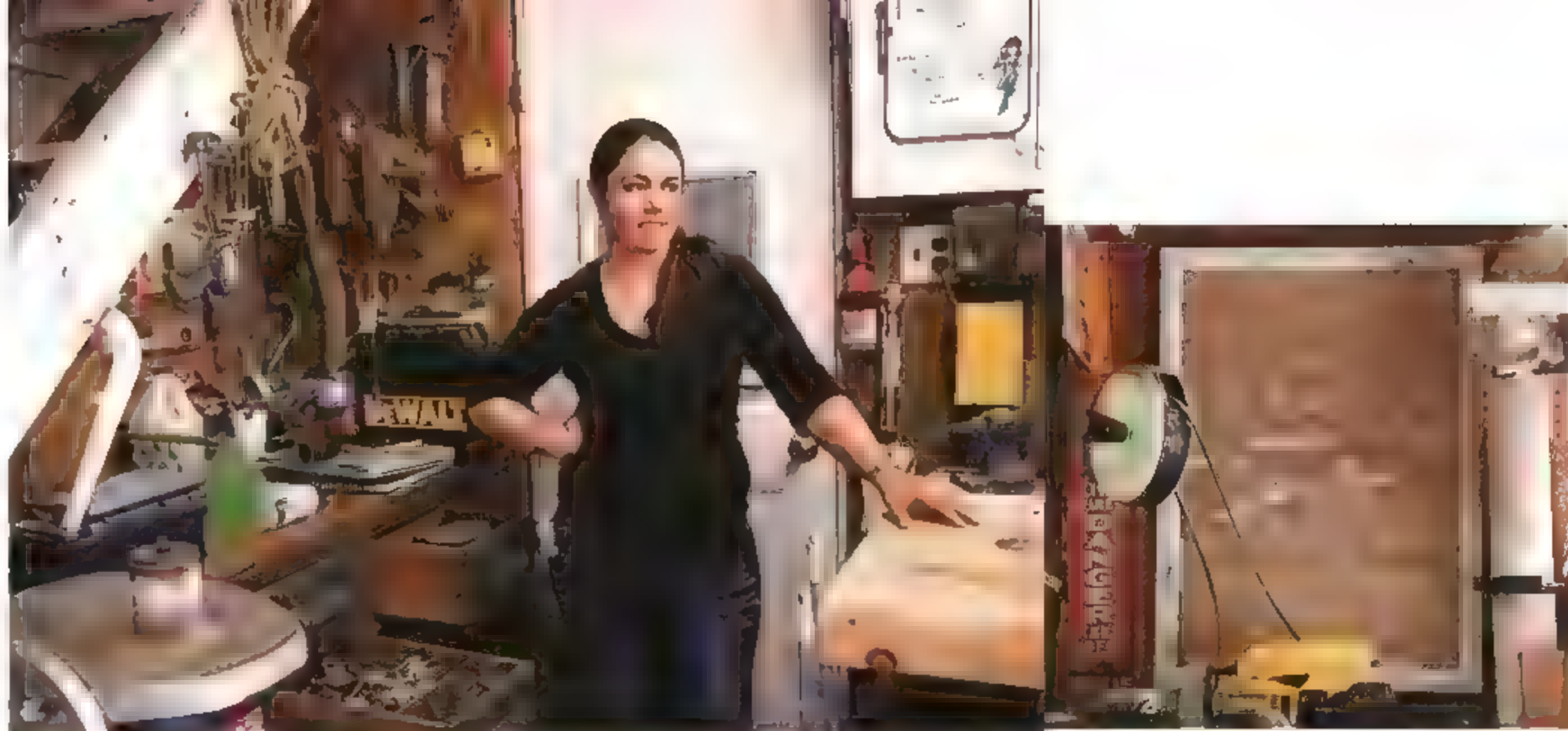
The store has since closed, but Cheryl now takes orders through her own website ([junkn.ckdesigns.com](http://junkn.ckdesigns.com)). To supplement her income, she works in real estate, which has its perks. When clearing out their homes to sell, Cheryl's clients often give her old hardware, tools, and furniture, which she refinishes or farms for parts. "They'll say, 'I was going to throw it out, but I'd rather see someone use it,'" she explains.

So many people donate materials that Cheryl bought a pickup truck and a trailer to haul it all. She keeps her trove, which also includes garage-sale and Craigslist finds, beneath a carport canopy she erected next to her workshop.

All this hunting and gathering may seem extreme, but not to me. I'm a space-constrained apartment dweller with a long list of street scores that got away. I'll never forget that freestanding farmhouse sink whose twin I later saw for \$3,500.

Cheryl doesn't need to pay salvage-dealer prices; she can build just about anything, and she's got a tricked-out shop with not one but six routers always at the ready, so she never has to change a bit.

I'd expect nothing less from a die-hard *TO*Her. ■



**what she's working on**  
(1) Cheryl explains how she'll put old hinges and pulleys on new cabinet projects. (2) Plans for a dining table; its top is an old entry door. (3) Cheryl uses an electrified lantern to light the interior of a reclaimed-wood shelving unit. (4) She burnishes a door's incised panel design with a blowtorch. (5) Vintage block-and-tackle pulleys that she uses as design elements. (6) Cheryl prepares to router a bead detail along a door's edges. (7) A farm table built from barn wood and pulleys.



## More of your reuse projects

Other *TOH* folks are putting their creativity, and muscle, to work turning old finds into cool new home goods too.



### furnace-door beer tap

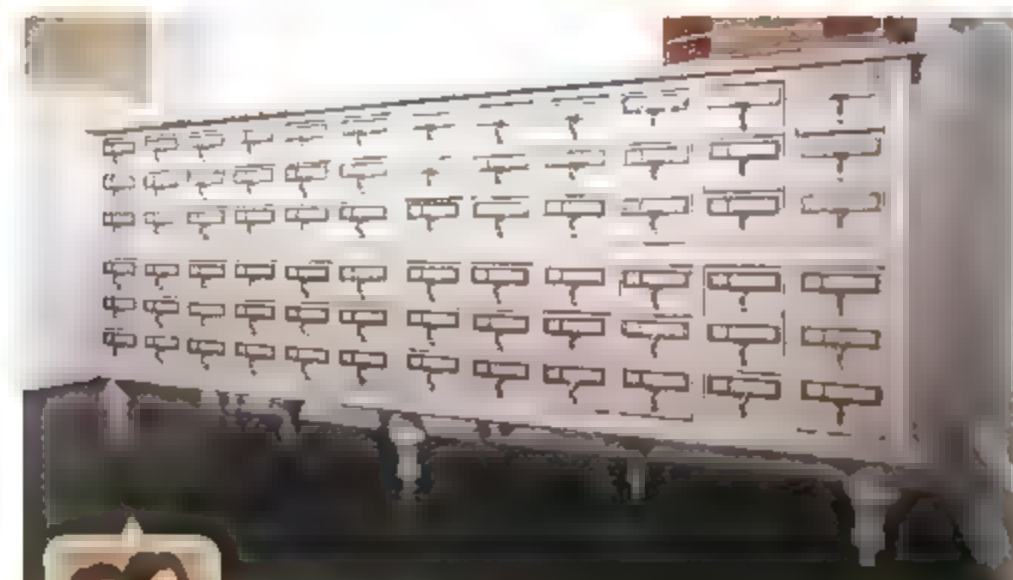
My stepdad Don fastened an old furnace door to the wall and drilled holes in it for beer taps. To access the beer lines, which are routed through PVC pipes behind the wall, you just open the door. A store-bought grate slid underneath catches any overflow.

Trent Beers, Columbus, Ohio

### ladder pot rack

My wife Joy and I wanted a rack to match the rustic style of our farmhouse kitchen. I found this wood ladder back when I worked in construction, and it was ideal. We cleaned it up, then hung two eye hooks.

Terry Randol, Garrett, Ind.



### card-catalog serving station

We transformed a library card catalog into a buffet; its drawers are just right for stashing wine bottles and utensils. We took the entire piece apart, removing all 72 drawers and reassembled it on a new platform base. We then added legs and trim and sanded, painted, and distressed it.

Adrianne and Jeremy Lentine, Phoenix



## “One thing led to another...”

TOH readers share how a quick fix, an argument, even an off-hand comment led them down the rabbit hole of a large-scale renovation

By THIS OLD HOUSE EDITORS Illustrations by TIM BOWER

Ever had a five-minute repair job morph into a monthlong project? How about one of those “while you’re at it” requests from your honey that resulted in a renovation far, far beyond your initial plans? If you recognize yourself in these examples, rest assured that you’re in good company. Read on to see how fellow readers took on small projects that ended up becoming wildly ambitious.



### Big TV led to a revamped den

WHO > Kathy and Nick Pethicke

WHERE > Northville, Mich.

Nick got a bonus at work and decided he wanted a 42-inch flat-screen TV. It was too big for the entertainment unit in our den, but that was okay because I’d wanted a new one and the furniture store was having a sale. So we bought that piece first and then splurged on a sofa bed since the sale prices were so good.

This is where things start to get complicated. The sofa bed didn’t match the wallpaper, which was a so okay because I’d wanted to change it. While scraping it off, we found layers of paint and wallpaper beneath it, and damaged plaster behind them. So we decided to demolish the walls—and, while we were at it, the ceiling—and replace them with drywall. When cutting the drywall, Nick had a run-in with his table saw, resulting in a trip to the ER for seven stitches to his index finger. While at the hospital, we decided to pull up the den’s carpet

and refinish the hardwood floors. They turned out so well that we had hardwood floors put in throughout the house. As the improvements looked great, but by the time we were done, there was no money left over to buy the 42-inch TV that had started it all.



### New appliance led to a whole new second story

WHO > Andrea and Ryan J. Kragerud

WHERE > Longmont, Colo.

Our renovation began as a heated discussion over who should do the dishes: my wife or me. We finally agreed that what we really needed was a dishwasher. But getting one meant first recessing the fridge, which in turn meant losing the tub in the adjacent bathroom. Reducing the size of the bath in our one-bedroom home was not an option. What to do? Our answer: Add a second story and an entire basement. This plan required lifting the house so that the foundation could support the weight

how simple projects can snowball



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of the additions. Our daughter was born amidst the rubble, and now after seven years of remodeling, we have five bedrooms, three baths, two dishwashers, and an incredible quantity of DIY know-how.



#### **New soap dish led to two new bathrooms**

WHO> Joseph Gray II  
WHERE> Clarks Summit, Pa.

When a built-in soap dish fell off the wall of our guest bathroom, I realized simply gluing it back on wasn't an option. So I began taking out the surrounding tile. The next thing I knew, I was standing in a fully gutted bathroom. Which led me to realize that if I rearranged its floor plan, I could carve out more space in the adjacent master bath, which had only

a shower stall. So I went for it. By the end, the only thing I hadn't replaced in both rooms was a cast-iron tub in the guest bath. I love my larger master bath with its luxurious soaker tub!



#### **Tree removal led to a curb-appeal overhaul**

WHO> Vinnie and Mary Lou Maroney  
WHERE> Rockland, Mass.

We hired a pro to remove a tree in our yard, which raccoons were scaling to get to our roof. While he was there, we casually mentioned that we eventually wanted to replace some bushes out front. Being a thoughtful, proactive type, our landscaper pulled them up for us, leaving our yard with gaping holes.

The barren facade led us to notice that some of the wood windows were rotting. Soon we were rushing to

put in new ones while also planting new shrubs to make our house look presentable. This project took several weeks, and when we stepped back to admire the result, the siding started to look awfully shabby. What started as an offhand comment about bushes had us re-siding our entire house with cedar shingles.

It took us over two years to finish painting trim and adding light fixtures along the way, but we're finally done. Well, except that we're scooping out a spot for a deck. Stay tuned.



#### **Changing cabinet hardware led to a brand-new kitchen and more**

WHO> Christine

and Roger Olson

WHERE> Centennial, Colo.

One day Christine remarked that she didn't like the drawer pulls for our kitchen cabinets. That should have been my first clue that a massive project was about to begin. While shopping for new hardware, it dawned on us that our small kitchen was adjacent to a bright, airy dining room we hardly used. Why not get rid of it and create the bigger kitchen we'd always dreamed of?

So we embarked on a renovation. Our plans included new flooring that extended into the area where the staircase is, so it made sense to put up a new banister at the same time. Then the carpet in the adjacent family room looked worn out next to the new flooring, so we had it replaced. Though we had a few "what have we done?" moments, we soldiered on. With the help of a designer, a makeshift kitchen in the basement and \$60,000 in hard-earned cash, we finally completed our kitchen-plus renovation, transforming it from a cramped room to a great space for cooking and entertaining. ■

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## "I planted a garden to share"

When a local community garden lost one of its two plots, TOH reader Angela Baker stepped in, converting her family's yard into 31 fruit and vegetable beds.

their  
produce  
feeds lots  
of families



**WHO** • Angela Baker  
**WHERE** • Portland, Oreg.  
**WHAT** • Grows produce for a nonprofit serving struggling families.

I'd always been around gardens but never had a place to grow one of my own—till now. When I was a kid, I visited my grandparents in Indiana, where their entire yard was a vegetable garden. Looking back, it seems like my grandfather was the original urban homesteader.

After my husband, Casey, and I got married, I grew tomatoes, lettuce, and herbs on our apartment's balcony. By the time we'd had three children, we were renting a 725-square-foot house. As anyone with a large family can attest, making ends meet can be tough.

That's when we enrolled in Birch Community Services (BCS), a local nonprofit that provides food and services to more than 700 families in exchange for a small fee and at least two hours of volunteer work a month. The group oversees two community gardens, where members plant, weed, mulch, and harvest the produce, which is shared between them.

Thanks to the group's help in feeding our family, along with financial assistance from a nonprofit land trust that owns our property, we were able to buy this 1922 Craftsman cottage in 2009. I could finally have a garden of my own.

The quarter-acre lot is larger than most in Portland, but the yard was in rough shape. The sod covering the front yard was dying, and the back-



**before** Though some of the sod was dying, the front yard received sunlight for most of the day—perfect for growing a vegetable garden.  
**after** A mulch path leads to the front door; squash and beans are on the right and artichokes, tomatoes, and beets on the left. White daisies and purple dahlias enhance the home's curb appeal.



{ before }

Cats everywhere are having a hard time smelling their litter boxes



freshstep.com



landscaping

yard was mostly weeds, invasive bamboo from a neighbor's yard, and a damaged ornamental plum tree. I planned to grow vegetables in the backyard and a traditional lawn out front.

But shortly after moving in, BCS lost one of its gardens, which would have meant less produce for the families. Because the group helped us, and since our property gets plenty of sun, we decided to turn over the entire lot to growing produce for BCS families. We drew up a plan with as many beds as possible and, with a \$500 budget and help from volunteers, transformed our weedy yard by "lasagna gardening." Instead of turning over the soil, you enrich it by layering manure, mulch, and straw on top; then you plant, which we did the very next day.

We have 31 beds filled with things like raspberries, kale, strawberries, and squash in the front, back, and side yards. Thanks to Portland's temperate climate, we have a long growing season, from mid-May through mid-October.

Each week, volunteers stop by to harvest, weed, and prune, bringing picked food to the BCS warehouse. To keep costs down, we rely on donations of seeds, instead of buying established plants, and compost.

During the gardening season, our house is always buzzing with activity. Children love to pick and eat berries while their parents are working in the garden. When I'm not planting, weeding, or harvesting, I teach gardening classes there to show other BCS families how inexpensive it can be to grow their own food at home.

I've met so many wonderful people doing this, and we grew more than 1,500 pounds of food last year! I guess we're a lot like my grandfather: modern-day urban homesteaders. I finally have a garden, although on a much bigger scale than most. And I wouldn't have it any other way. ■

 **click away!**  
Don't forget to take photos of your garden now when your yard is looking its best. Then they'll be ready to submit for next year's Reader-Created Issue.



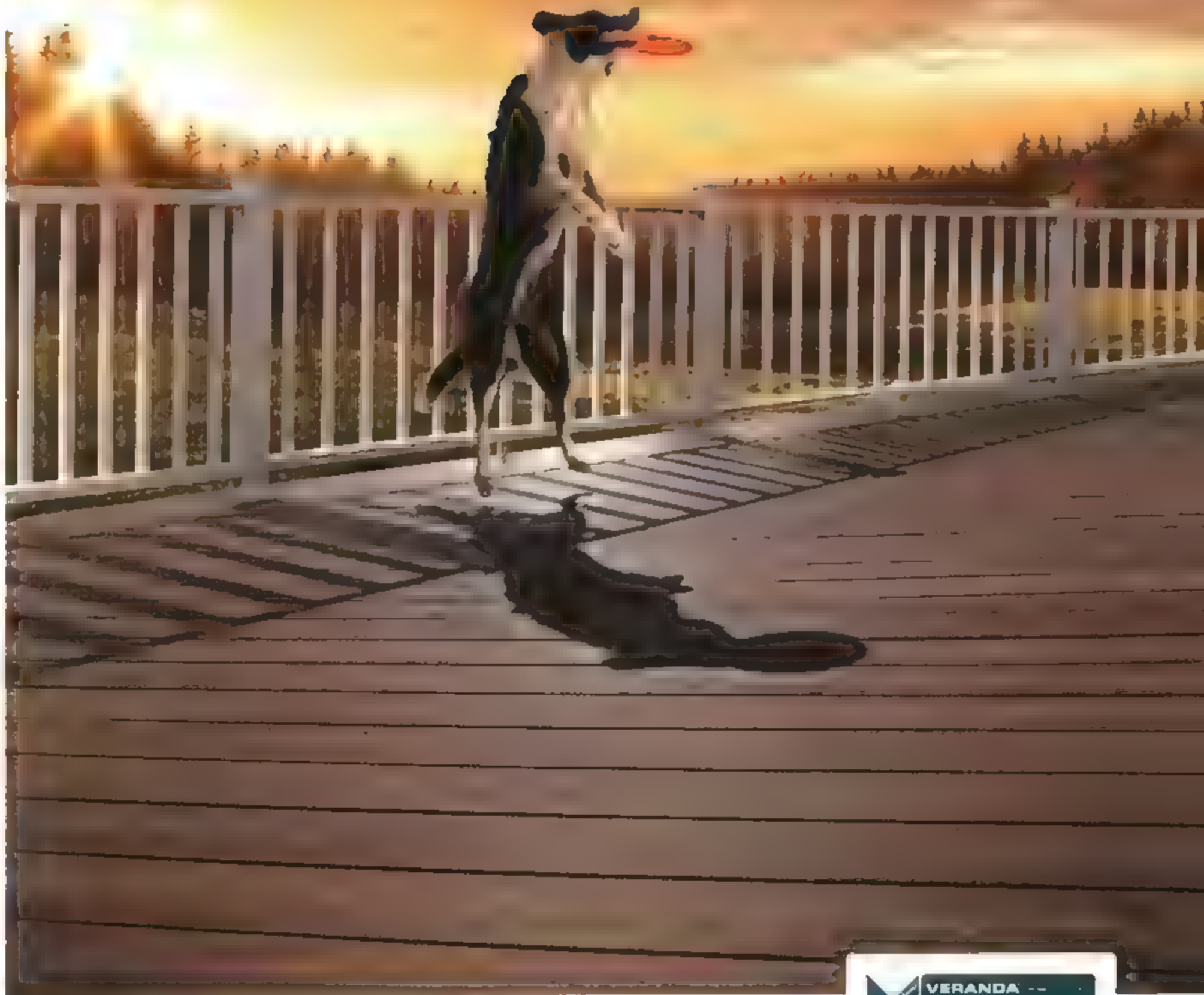
[during]



[during]

during Volunteers, including Angela and her son, Harold (ABOVE, LEFT), layered manure, mulch and straw, converting the weedy backyard into garden beds. after Chives, globe artichokes, heirloom tomatoes, beets, peas, chard, squash, and cardoons fill the backyard. During the growing season, produce is harvested three times a week and taken to a warehouse for participating families to pick up.

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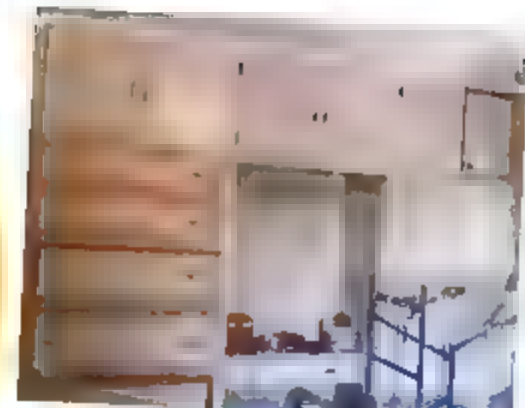
PHOTOGRAPHY: GEMTE & MYERS

## "We took our office back in time"

TOH readers Kelly and Wayne Averbek show how they made a dated room into a cozy nook with period style to spare



amazing  
what a  
little paint  
can do



during

**during** The upstairs room had ample storage, but its cabinetry and painted fir floor were out of sync with the home's early-20th-century style. **after** White paint and dark pulls refreshed the built-in, while a faux-grain floor and repro sconces added to the space's vintage charm.

### the project tally:

Gutted the room ourselves.	\$350
Hired a contractor to hang wallboard.	
Sanded and trimmed out cabinetry with attic strips	\$75
Scored a "2 for 1" deal on oil-rubbed bronze hardware	\$37
Installed new sconces in place of fluorescent lighting	\$50
Primed, painted, and faux-finished with sage table "oops" paint. Sealed floor with polyurethane	\$92
Turned an old shelf into a side table using leftover trim and paint	\$0
Repositioned a glass chandelier globe and glass insulators as cups to corral writing tools and scissors	\$4

total

\$608



**WHO>** Kelly and Wayne Averbek  
**WHERE>** Jerome, Idaho  
**WHAT>** Used leftovers and bargain buys to age an office to perfection.

Unlike the rest of our 1916 home, this room's good bones were buried under 1950s "updates": pale pine slab-front cabinets that were chipped, and fir floors with a crazy tricolor painted border beneath ugly brown carpeting. We gutted the room, leaving the built-in intact, and had a contractor hang new Sheetrock on the walls. We wanted the space to reflect the house's original era, so we sanded the cabinetry and "paneled" the drawer and door fronts by adding lattice strips, which also disguised dings and broken corners. White paint and dark hardware revived the unit and, along with period-style sconces, added vintage character. We gave the walls a damask look with stencils and paint. On the floor, we sanded and painted a faux area rug, then used a wood-graining tool to make "planks" of distressed white paint over a base of butterscotch. Three coats of polyurethane sealed the surface. The room was part of an upstairs redo that spanned a few summer weeks. Now we've got a space for stashing craft supplies and computer gear that's a pleasure to be in rather than an eyesore ■





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11,518  
bucks!



**"I made an ugly garage look like a country cottage."**

WHO: Rose Byrne

WHERE: Hyattsville, Md.  
"I wanted to create an interesting focal point on the side of my plain white garage. So I hung an old six-pane window a friend gave me right on the cinder block and framed it with two wood shutters from a local salvage shop. After attaching a window box and white picket fencing that runs the entire length of the garage, it now looks more like a country cottage than an ugly old garage."

**What Rose Saved: About \$1,840**



was our next big project, but we couldn't afford it yet. In the meantime, we still needed a way to organize all of our pots and pans.

The solution came in the form of an old ladder we found lying on the side of the road. We cut the ladder down, and after some cleanup and a fresh coat of leftover paint, we hung it on the wall and used some old deck screws as hooks. It works perfectly well and gives our kitchen an old-timey feel that we both love."

**What Margie Saved: About \$85**



**"I patched the cracks in my plaster walls with a photograph."**

WHO: Anonymous

(for a reason)

WHERE: Fairfield, Conn.

"Last year my wife and I started noticing some huge cracks growing in our plaster walls. We considered hiring a pro to come patch them. The problem was that the walls had been custom painted by a previous owner using some kind of sponging technique, so matching the pattern—not to mention the paint color—would have been a nightmare. Instead of calling in a plaster repairman and a decorative painter, we decided to take the cheap and easy way out.

After taking a photograph of the patterned walls, I printed it up on our color printer, then cut the print out into long strips, which I attached to the walls with a glue stick. Both of us were shocked by how well it worked. You would never know that it's a coverup."

**What Anonymous Saved: Around \$65**

provides more storage, but we also turned it into an elegant window seat by attaching legs to the bottom, painting it, and topping it off with a padded seat covered with material we found at the Salvation Army store."

**What Robin Saved: At least \$328**



**"I transformed an old fence into some decorative shutters."**

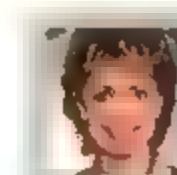
WHO: Jaime

Shackford

WHERE: Edmond, Okla.

"I was never a big fan of the vinyl shutters the previous owners installed on the front of our house. So, after tearing down an old fence panel that was hiding some pool equipment in our backyard, I decided to create my own authentic board and batten shutters. First, I measured each window and cut the reclaimed boards accordingly. Then I glued and nailed each panel together, added strap hinges, and applied a wood stain/sealer. The whole project cost me just \$75."

**What Jaime Saved: Around \$2,100**



**"We transformed a piece of trash into a pot rack."**

WHO: Margie Sagner

WHERE: Rochester, N.Y.

"After we bought our house in 2008, we quickly discovered that the kitchen cabinets were not properly attached to the wall—to the extent that we were reluctant to use them. We did, and then realized there still wasn't enough storage space. Redoing the kitchen

**"I found a clever way to finally get some carriage doors."**

WHO: Tracy Westwater

WHERE: Orland Park, Ill.

"I always wanted carriage-style garage doors, but they were way beyond my budget—that is, until I decided to create a faux version of them on my own. After removing the existing trim, I sanded the door and primed it. Then I drew a carriage door design right on the door. Some black gloss paint created surprisingly authentic-looking 'windows.' To add dimension, I cut some plywood sheets into strips, which I attached to the door with liquid nails, giving it a raised-pane look. After tacking on some used gate hinges (just \$3.88 a pair) and handles, ta-da! I had carriage doors that cost just \$65."

**What Tracy Saved: More than \$2,000**



**"I used two old doors and a throwaway cabinet to create a posh home office."**

WHO: Robin Martin

WHERE: Manchester, Mich.

"I was in desperate need of more storage and workspace in my small home office, but I didn't want to spend too much on a new desk and cabinetry or shelving. Instead, I picked up some old doors and a used upper kitchen cabinet at a local salvage shop. With some help from my neighbors, we cut down one of the doors to create a desktop, then hinged another door beneath it to conceal some storage bins. It's great because the hinged door can be flipped up for additional workspace. The kitchen cabinet

# "By hook, crook, or the occasional dumpster dive"

From roadside salvage pot racks to plastic fruit finials, our tightfisted readers bring new meaning to the term *resourcefulness*. Illustrations by MARK MATCHO



**"I scored a perfect new countertop—in my neighbor's trash."**

WHO: Linda M.

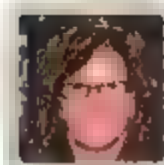
WHERE: From the TOH discussion boards

My neighbor was about to throw out the sink cutout from her new high-grade laminate countertop, but I couldn't let that happen. Before she could toss it, I asked if

I could have it. After making the cabinet shelf out of two red-oak boards, I outfitted it with a drawer and a shelf, both of which I made from a sheet of dinged-up 3/4-inch plywood. What was slated for the landfill is now a beautiful Craftsman-style cabinet that my son uses in his (very tiny) kitchen. The entire project cost 38 bucks!"

**What Linda Saved: \$80**





**"I made a backsplash out of trailer skirting."**

WHO > Patty Studdard

WHERE > Cookeville, Tenn.

"I used tin skirting—usually sold for mobile homes—to make a kitchen backsplash for my son's house. It comes in 5-by-8-foot sheets and is easy to cut to size and glue in place. Best of all, I paid only \$30, compared with tin tiles, which can cost up to \$20 each."

What Patty Saved: About \$170



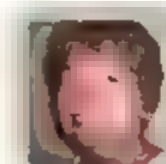
**"I leveled my floors with kitty litter."**

WHO > Robert Lattin  
WHERE > Minneapolis

"There are lots of commercial leveling compounds on the market, but they can be expensive and difficult to mix and pour—especially if you have a

large surface area and are working by yourself. When I found out my floors were sloped, my solution was to use plain old kitty litter instead. After I checked to make sure the poured litter was level, I screwed half-inch plywood over it to make a flat surface. The litter levels the floors and also acts as a sound dampener."

What Robert Saved: About \$3,060



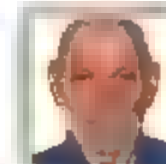
**"I created wainscoting out of salvaged cabinet doors."**

WHO > Mary Griffin

WHERE > Godfrey, Ill.

"Now, what are you going to do with those?" my husband asked me when I started eyeing some cabinet doors at our local home center. I think they would make some good wainscoting, I told him. At first he thought the idea sounded a little nutty. But I had wanted wainscoting for my newly finished basement and figured the white raised-panel cabinet doors would work perfectly. After buying 36 of them—at 50 cents a pop!—we applied them to the walls with liquid nails. And let me tell you, they look terrific. Even my husband thinks so."

What Mary Saved: Around \$1,500



**"I built a high-end industrial-look headboard for less than 50 bucks!"**

WHO > Bill Kesler

WHERE > Atlanta

"My teenage daughter wanted her bedroom to have an 'industrial' look with lockers and lots of other metals. I thought about using stainless-steel boxes from Pottery Barn to make her a queen-size headboard, but they were \$24 each. Each one was 12 by 12 inches, so it would have taken at least a dozen to do the job. Forget that



Instead, I bought a sheet of 1/2-inch plywood and covered it with a minimum roof flashing. Then I framed it and covered the seam with 1 1/2-inch maple, fastened with sheet metal screws. I hung it with a French cleat. The headboard cost less than \$50 to build, so I saved a bunch of money. She likes it, and her friends admire the look."

What Bill Saved: \$230

**"I found an entirely new use for plastic fruit."**

WHO > Riata

WHERE > From the TOH discussion boards

"When I needed new curtain rods for my house, I used galvanized electrical conduit rods, which I spray-painted either copper, brass, or black. For finials, I just stuffed some dowels into plastic fruit, adhering it using expanding polyurethane glue. Then I spray-painted the fruit the same color as the rods. It's been seven years, and they still look great—just like the real thing."

What Riata Saved: About \$60



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build with  
Tom Silva

## "Help! My magazines are a real mess"

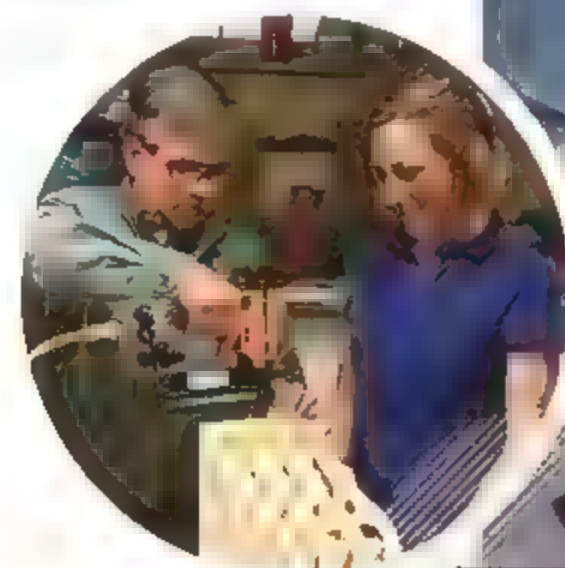
TOH reader April Monroe gets help making a fancy magazine file By JENNIFER STIMPSON Photograph by WENDELL T WEBBER



WHO April Monroe  
WHERE Sterling, Mass.  
WHAT Wanted a handmade storage rack worthy of her collection of TOH magazines.

April Monroe can't bear to toss old magazine issues. "There are so many great projects I want to try," she says. Although plastic magazine holders are inexpensive enough at office supply stores, she doesn't like the idea of placing pages full of design and remodeling ideas in holders with such little personality.

So April turned to TOH general contractor Tom Silva to help her build a container more in the spirit of the magazines it's meant to hold. Tom attached brackets typically used for porch trim to a simple wood frame to create a freestanding file with decorative scrollwork dividers. Turn the page to see how he and April built it using a few basic tools and materials readily available at a home center.



For complete instructions,  
turn the page

people,  
learn to deal  
with your  
issues!



Brackets: 1 in. x 1/2 in.  
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**Cost:** From \$30 (depending on the style of bracket)  
**Time:** 3 hours  
**Difficulty:** Easy Attaching the brackets is fast and easy, but mitering the molding takes time and precision cuts.

## HOW IT'S DONE

# Build a magazine file

This rack uses four 10-by-12-inch brackets spaced 2 inches apart. Pick a bracket slightly larger than the magazine you plan to store, with scrollwork bold enough to keep the corners from flopping over. Most brackets are set in an L-shaped frame; removing it will allow the magazines to sit directly against the scrollwork. Select boards that are just a little wider than the bracket's longest edge.

**1 Remove the bracket frames.** Carefully wedge a chisel between the scrollwork and the frame to break the glue's bond and loosen the nails without cracking the wood. Use a hammer to gently tap the chisel, and pull the frame away from the scrollwork.



**5 Secure the remaining brackets.** Place spacers between the brackets along the back and base to keep the dividers parallel. Glue and nail each bracket to the frame, as in Step 4.

**2 Cut the base and back.** Use 2-inch blocks to space the brackets evenly, then measure the length of this assembly. Add 1/4 inch and cut two pieces to this length using a circular saw. Measure the short extension of the scrollwork, and trim the base piece to that depth. Measure the long extension and add 1/4 inch to get the height of the back; trim the second piece.



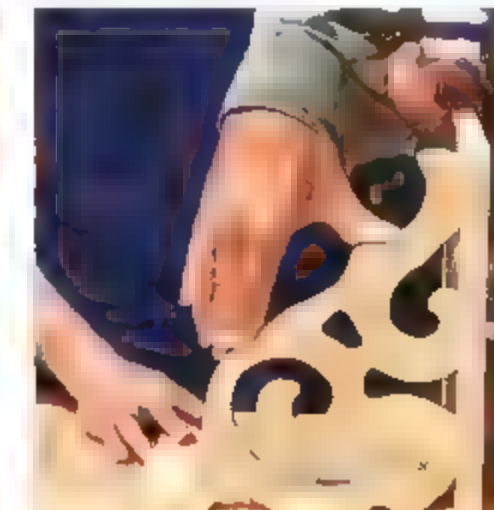
**6 Cut the first molding strip.** Mark a length of molding for one side edge of the back. To cut the lower end where it meets the base, lay the molding flat on the saw deck and miter it at 45 degrees, like a picture frame. At the top corner, stand the molding on edge and miter it at 45 degrees, like a bevel.

**3 Assemble the base and back.** Apply wood glue to the rear edge of the base piece and butt it against the back piece. Using a hammer and 1 1/4-inch finishing nails—or a pneumatic nail gun and 1 1/4-inch brad nails, fasten through the back and into the base.



**7 Cut and install the side pieces.** Apply glue to the strip, hold it against the edge, and nail it in place with a pneumatic nail gun using 3/8-inch brad nails. Mark and cut the molding for the three remaining side strips the same way, with a picture-frame miter at one end and a bevel at the other.

**4 Attach the first bracket.** Position a bracket 1/4 inch in from the edge of the assembly. Mark its position, apply glue to its edges, and set it back in place. Nail through the frame and into the scrollwork with 1 1/4-inch brad nails.



**8 Finish the molding and paint it.** Mark the length of molding for the front and top edges, stand them on edge, and miter their ends at opposing 45-degree angles. Apply glue and nail them in place. Fill the nail holes and sand those spots. Finally, in a well-ventilated area, spray the assembly with primer, let it dry, and spray-paint it a fitting color.



**pro advice**  
 TOM SILVA  
 TOH GENERAL  
 CONTRACTOR

"For thinner dividers, use decorative stair brackets—or shape your own from 1/4-inch plywood. Then rout slots into the back and base to hold the brackets in place."

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## "We're saving a piece of history"

TOH readers Doris and Samuel Collins, stewards of a storied Texas property, have turned it into a community gathering spot

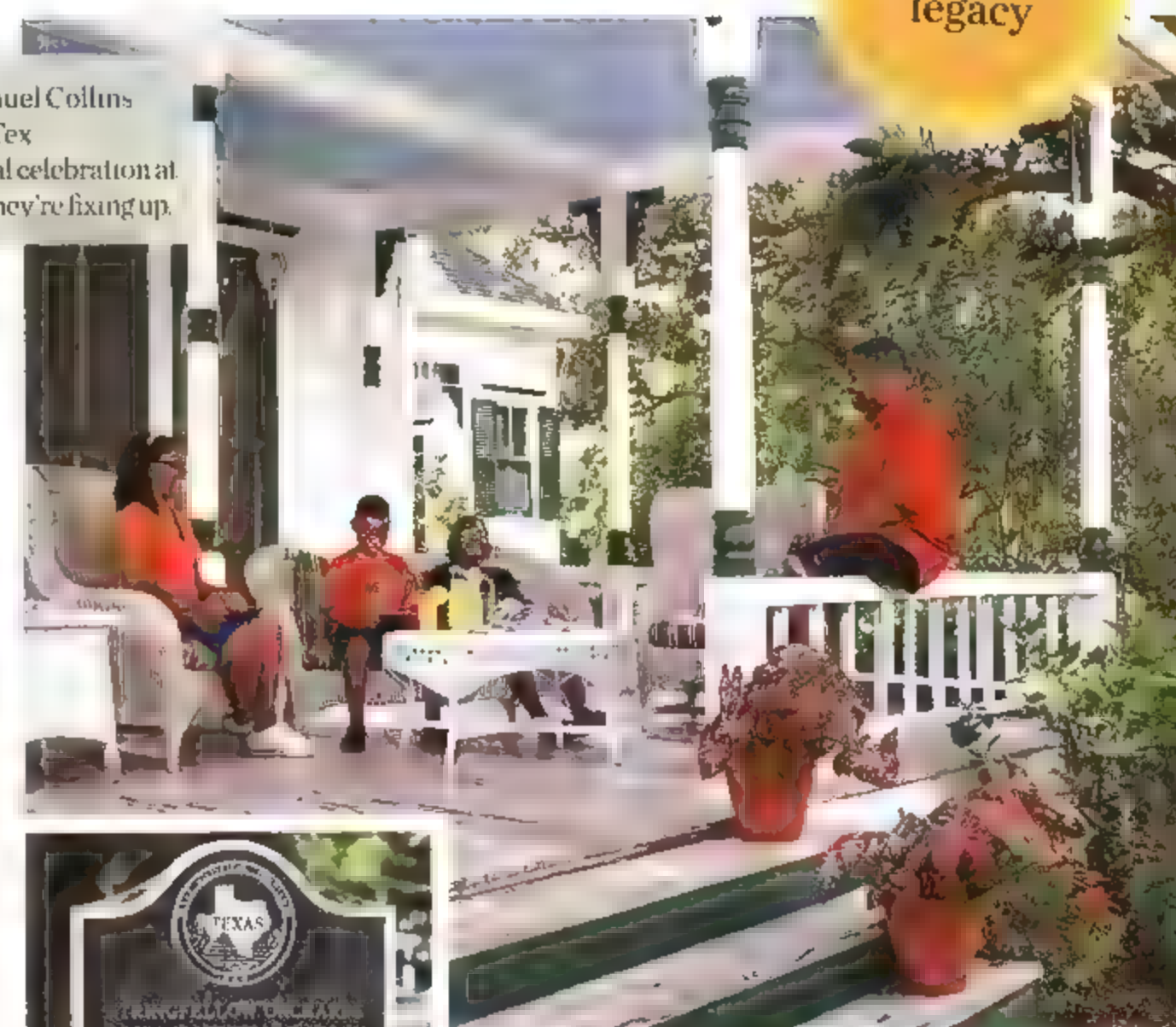


WHO Doris and Samuel Collins  
WHERE Hitchcock, Tex.  
WHAT Host an annual celebration at a historic property they're fixing up.

The first thing my wife, Doris, said when she saw the house was, "Are you serious?" We were living with our kids in a Texas town near Galveston and looking to upsize. A crumbling farmhouse wasn't what she had in mind. Nobody had lived there for a while, and the driveway was so dense with brush that you couldn't see the place from the road—it was a jungle. The porch was falling down. There were holes in the roof and, as a result, water damage inside. But I could see potential.

I grew up nearby in Hitchcock, but I'd never paid much attention to the property. Then one day, while driving by, I noticed a roadside marker. I stopped, read it, and thought, *Oh, this is an interesting story about this Mr. Stringfellow.* He was an internationally known horticulturist who tended orchards there. Little did I know that when I went down that overgrown drive, shaded with live oaks and towering pines, I'd fall in love with the place. As I walked around, I imagined raising my family there, adding our legacy to the house's history.

So we bought the house and its 9½ acres in December 2005 (most of the original parcel of land had been sold off years before). A gentleman from the Galveston Historical Foundation came out to give it the once-over. He said that beneath



welcome one and all The restored porch of the 1883 farmhouse (ABOVE) is a favorite hangout for (from left) Torin, Joseph, Dallas and their father, Samuel Collins III. LEFT: The historical marker on the main road that first caught Samuel's attention and led him down the driveway

the dilapidated exterior, the home's bones were great.

It was built in 1883 for Henry Marvin Stringfellow, a Confederate Army veteran and onetime slave

owner. Despite his past allegiance to the South, he paid freed men a dollar a day, more than twice the going rate, to tend his 30 acres of pear trees. This planter was more than fair to his employees. Stringfellow's neighbors pressured him to keep wages down, but he didn't, giving his workers resources to buy land and build houses and schools. As



## reclaiming the past

**buffed up history** A local carpenter carved reproduction gingerbread and turned one new column to rebuild the termite- and water-damaged porch (BEFORE and RIGHT).

African-Americans, we felt this home would be good ground for us.

We all pitched in to demolish moisture- and termite-damaged areas and to strip wallpaper off original cypress boards inside. My father, a master electrician, helped me with rewiring and recommended an HVAC guy to put in central air and heat.

This may seem backwards, but our primary goal wasn't to move in—we've left the inside largely as it was, including the bathrooms and kitchen, and we're still fixing it up little by little. We wanted to get the property in shape to host the first annual Juneteenth Picnic at Stringfellow Orchards. Juneteenth, which originated in Galveston, commemorates June 19, 1865, the day slavery ended in the U.S.—two-and-a-half years after the Emancipation Proclamation. Doris and I wanted all people to celebrate this day, as important in our community as the Fourth of



July. To prepare, we worked on the house's exterior, rebuilding the porch, fixing columns and gingerbread trim, and getting the roof replaced. We chose a color scheme of bright white with green trim. We pruned the trees, some more than 200 years old. Slowly, the place began coming back to life.

About 600 people showed up for that first Juneteenth Picnic, and we've continued to host it every year. We put on activities for kids, a car show, and historical skits.

One attendee the second year was on the board of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and she asked if I wanted to take her place when she stepped down. Now I'm in my second three-year term, and I've gotten involved with three state historical organizations. Buying this house just ignited something in me, and I've become consumed by the idea of preservation.

When we started inviting people to the property, we wondered if we should tell the whole story or just the positives. To be good stewards, we decided, we have to tell the true



{ before }

history. If we ignore Mr. Stringfellow's Confederacy involvement, it's just another kind of discrimination. I look at our Juneteenth celebration as a way to acknowledge America's constant evolution. As such, an African-American family now holds the deed to this two-story farmstead and its pear, pecan, and orange trees.

At some point I realized I knew more about Stringfellow's history than my own; I've now traced my family to 1870. Before that, the census didn't list slaves by name.

Our buying this place has inspired other locals to research their families and to connect. They've even sent funding and volunteered to help us finish the house. We're still living nearby and working on it on weekends, but the goal is to make this our forever home. I don't really play the lottery, but if I hit it, we'll be moving in that much sooner. ■

**tree-lined approach** The 300-foot-long drive at Stringfellow Orchards (LEFT) was so overgrown when Samuel first visited, the house was not visible. Live oak, pine, pear, pecan, and orange trees still dot the property



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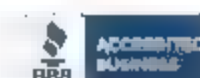
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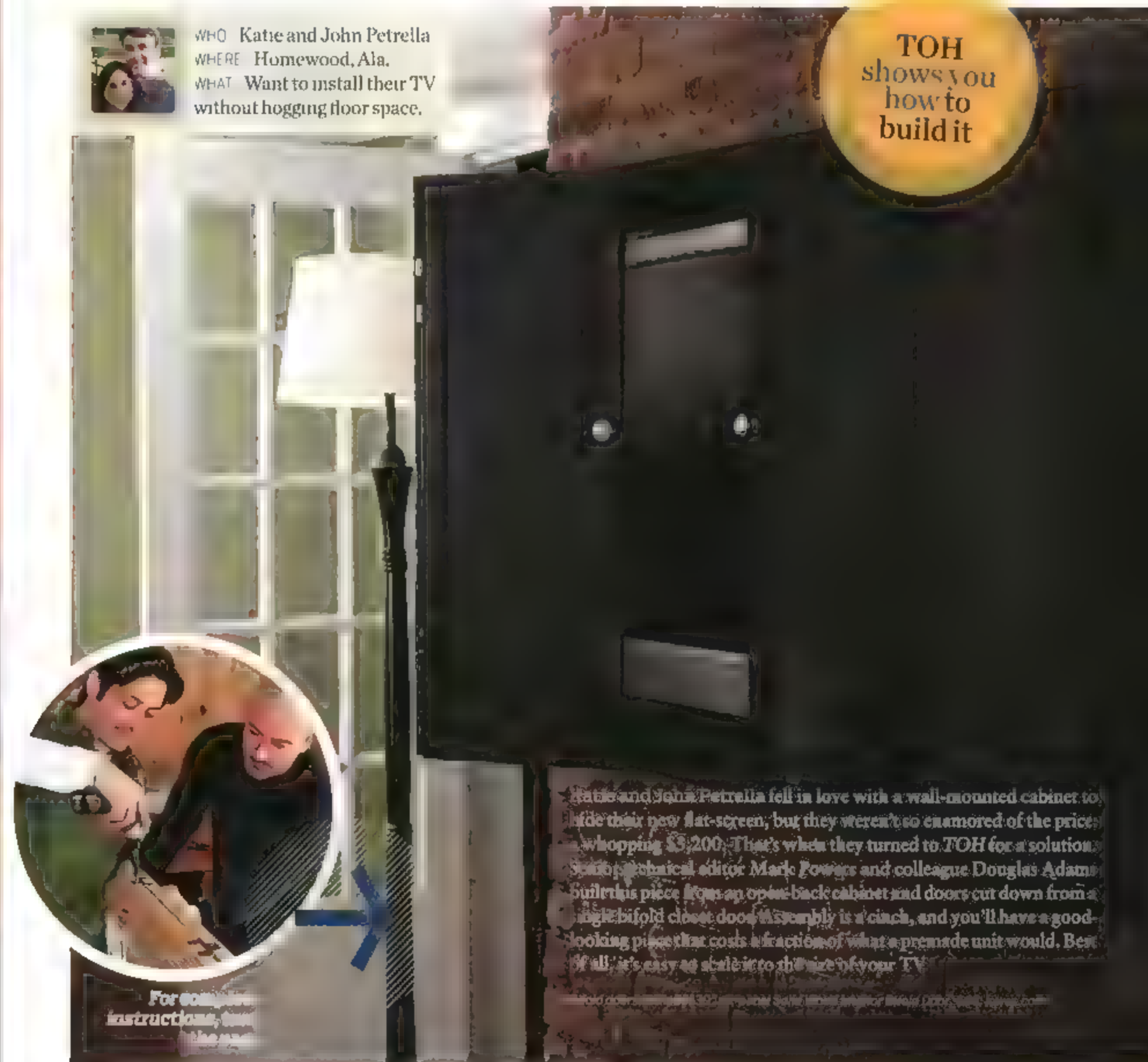
## "We need a TV hideaway"

TOH readers Katie and John Petrella bought a new flat screen TV but had no way to enclose it. Here's how to create a handsome hideaway By JENNIFER STIMPSON Photographs by RYAN BENYI



WHO Katie and John Petrella  
WHERE Homewood, Ala.  
WHAT Want to install their TV without hogging floor space.

TOH  
shows you  
how to  
build it



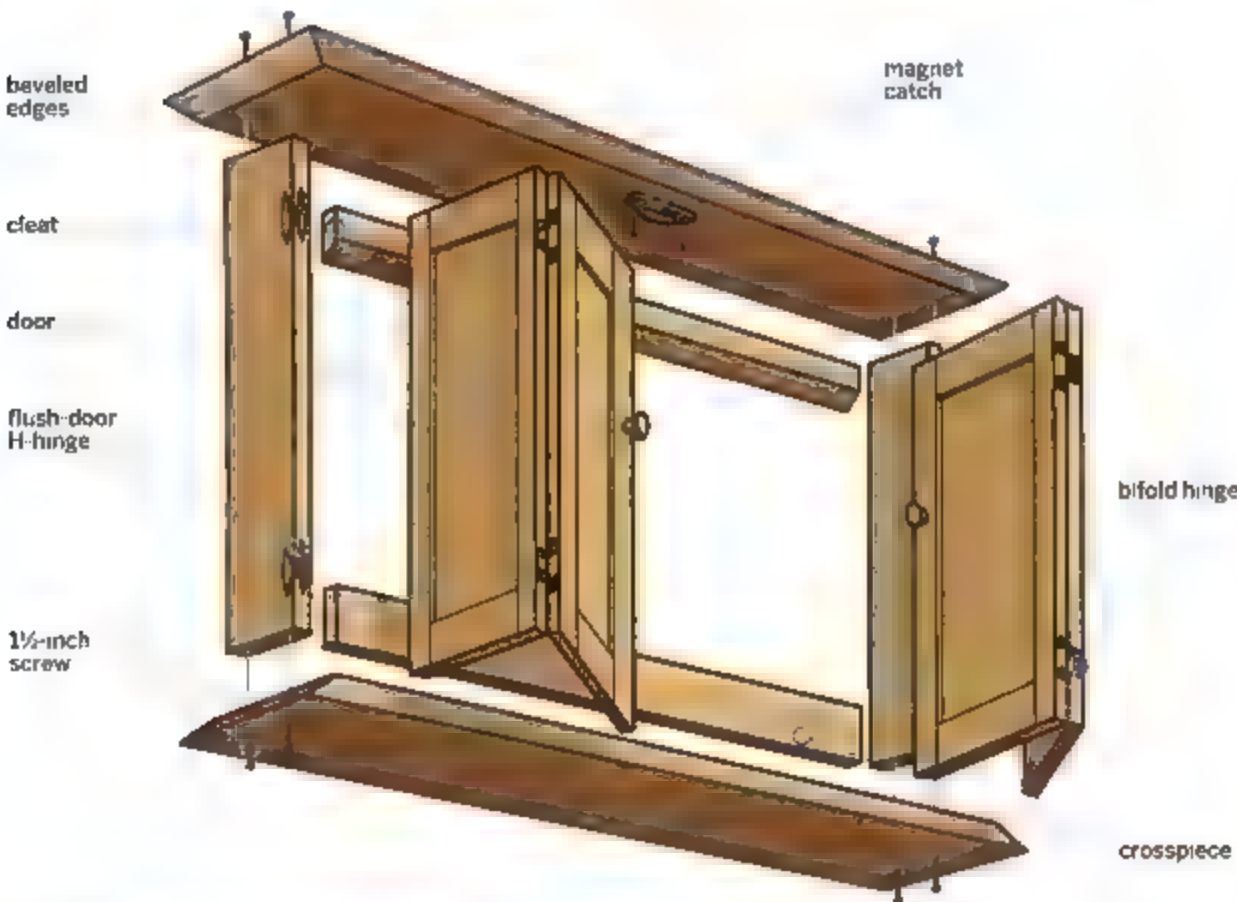
Katie and John Petrella fell in love with a wall-mounted cabinet to hide their new flat-screen, but they weren't so enamored of the price: a whopping \$3,200. That's when they turned to TOH for a solution. Senior technical editor Mark Powers and colleague Douglas Adams built this piece from an open-back cabinet and doors cut down from a single bi-fold closet door. Assembly is a cinch, and you'll have a good-looking piece that costs a fraction of what a premade unit would. Best of all, it's easy to scale to the size of your TV.

For complete instructions, turn to the page



# Day-to-day timeline

- PREP DAY** Size the doors and frame pieces to your TV (Step 1)  
**SATURDAY** Cut the doors and frame pieces (Steps 2 and 3).  
**SUNDAY** Assemble the frame and attach the cleat, doors, and hardware (Steps 4 and 5).



For a full cut list and more on sizing your cabinet to your TV, go to [thisoldhouse.com/july11](http://thisoldhouse.com/july11)

**Cost:** \$150 depending on the size of the bifold door  
**Time:** 4 hours  
**Difficulty:** Easy. It takes a steady hand to rip the bevels, but building it is elementary.

**TOOLS**  
circular saw  
combination square  
Speed Square  
drill/driver  
countersink bit  
self-centering hinge bit

**MATERIALS**  
**bifold door** Select a solid wood bifold door that, when you cut it down and push the sections side by side, measures at least 4 inches wider than your monitor.  
**1x** Choose side boards wide enough to span from the wall just past the face of the TV so it protrudes from the wall.  
**1x** Choose two boards at least 2 inches wider than the side boards to cover the doors and create the beveled overhang.  
**1x4s** to make the cleat and crosspiece. Get two boards as long as the top rail.  
**bifold door hinges** Join the halves once you cut down the door. Reuse the hinge from your door and get one more.  
**flush-door H-hinges** to attach the doors to the frame. Get four.  
**1 1/2-inch screws**



## 1. Size the doors

**Mark the bifold door.** You'll cut a tall bifold door down to get a pair of bifold doors that will cover the width of the TV. First, remove the hinges and lay the door halves facedown and side by side. Using a combination square, mark the cut lines on the rails to create four equal-height panels with a nail at the top and bottom of each.

**watch and learn**  
See a step-by-step video of how to build our TV cabinet at [thisoldhouse.com/july11](http://thisoldhouse.com/july11)

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HOME IMPROVEMENT TELEVISION





## 2. Cut and build the doors

**A. Cut the door panels.** Support the door on both sides of the middle rail as shown to keep from pinching the saw blade. Cut along the lines using a Speed Square to guide your circular saw.

**B. Attach the hinges.** Hold two panels back-to-back and on edge as shown. Align the hinges so that the knuckles are inset 4 inches from the top and bottom. Using a self-centering hinge bit, drill pilot holes, and screw the hinges in place. Repeat for the second door.

## 3. Cut the cabinet pieces

**A. Cut the top, bottom, and sides.** For the top and bottom, first measure the width of the doors next to each other plus  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch for the gaps between panels. Then add about 6 inches to give you the overhang on either side. Using a miter saw, cut the top and bottom pieces to this calculated length. Measure and cut the side pieces to the height of the doors plus  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch to allow for a slight gap at the top and bottom.

**B. Bevel the top and bottom pieces.** Clamp down the frame's top board with its front edge overhanging the table. Bevel the front edge with your circular saw set at a 45-degree angle. Repeat on the ends of the boards using your Speed Square as a fence. Cut the frame's bottom board in the same way.

**C. Mark the sides' location.** Put the top and bottom boards together along the back edges facedown. Measure, locate, and mark the midpoint. Use that point to center the overwidth of the doors, including the  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch addition from Step 3A, and mark each end. Draw a line at each mark, and use a combination square to transfer it around to the inner face where the sides will join.



**Tip** When ripping long lengths, keep your eye on the line guide at the front of your saw's foot—not the blade—for the straightest cut.

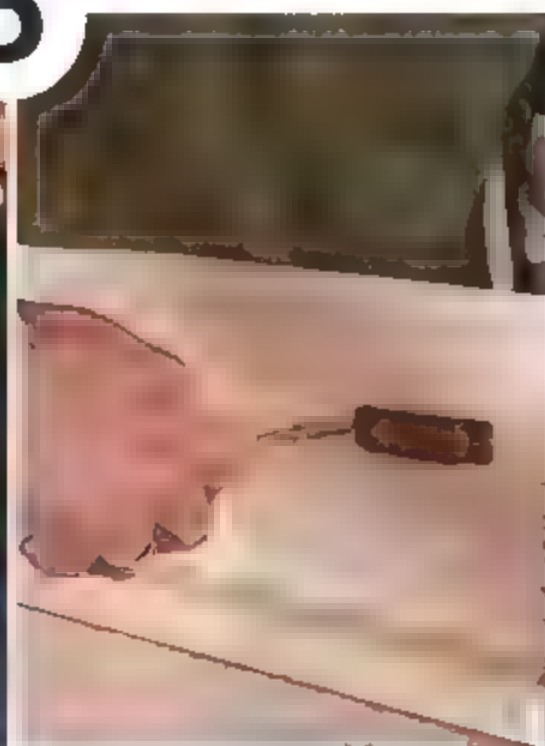
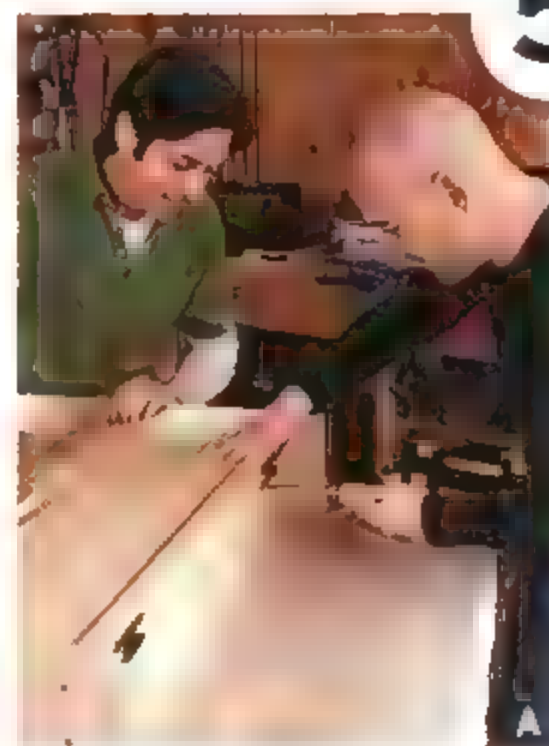


## 4. Build the open-back cabinet

**A. Assemble the shell.** Sandwich the side boards between the top and bottom with their bevels facing each other. Align the side boards outside edges with the transferred lines as shown. All four pieces should be flush at the back. Using the lines on the outer faces as references, drill two evenly spaced pilot holes just inside them. Sink  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch screws through the faces and into the ends of the side pieces.

**B. Make the cleat.** With your circular saw set at a 45-degree angle, rip a 1x4 down the center to get two equal-width boards with complementary bevels.

**C. Insert the cleat and crosspiece.** Post on the cleat against the underside of the top board, flush to the back of the frame. The cleat's point should be at the back so that it will hook into the wedge created by the lower half of the cleat, which will be mounted on the wall. Apply glue to the top and sides of the cleat, and nail it in place. Post on the 1x4 crosspiece against the frame's bottom piece between the sides, to keep the cabinet square, and glue and nail it in the same way.



## 5. Attach the doors and hardware

**A. Attach the doors.** Measure from the face of the cleat to the front edge of the side, and cut six spacer blocks to that size. Place the frame on its back, and stand the blocks on the cleat and crosspiece at each door panel, and then to prop up the doors. Lay the doors in the frame so that the outside edges align flush with the sides, centered top to bottom. Next, position the hinges an equal distance from the top and bottom, leaving about 4 inches at either end. Mark the edges of the doors and sides, drill pilot holes, then screw the hinges in place.

**B. Attach the magnets.** Fasten the magnet's metal plates on the back of the center doors by fastening them at the top of the centermost stiles. Close the left bifold door, and stick the left side of the magnet catch to its metal plate. Drive a screw through the right side of the catch into the top board. Open the left bifold and secure the opposite side of the magnet catch.

Now it's ready to hang on the wall. ■



TOH Reader Remodel  
Contest 2011

# MEET THE GRAND-PRIZE WINNERS

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*Why they took top honors:  
They opened up and enlarged  
a 1920s Colonial Revival  
without sacrificing its soul*

BY NICOLE RADER, HOMEOWNER



{ before }

## *from faded to perfect fit*

They loved the house's staid vintage looks **BEFORE** but were daunted by its dark rooms and leaky pipes. Ten years and many trips to the home center later, Nicole and John Rader, with daughter Olivia, 7, and son Max, 5, **ABOVE** have proved the point for the long haul: meet

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
Deborah Whitlaw Llewellyn  
STYLING BY Brian Carter

*piece by piece* Hard to imagine now, the kitchen was once small and dark. With the help of a carpenter, the homeowners demo'd one wall, hung new cabinets, and replaced the appliances with floor models bought at half price.



READER-CREATED IMAGE | UNDOCUMENTED



# It's

A BAD THING when water is gushing down a freshly painted wall and the plumber can't come—because there's a hurricane.

We have friends who ask us, "What's up with your house? Did you do something to make the water gods angry?" Because it wasn't just one leak or one little hurricane. That year, two other hurricanes came through, destroying windows and our front door.

Another time, we went away for three days and when we got back, we realized a pipe in the wall behind a toilet in the master bath had burst. We had to retile, of course.

Our trials weren't over yet. During the final phase of our three-phase redo, we ordered a new washer and dryer and left them sitting in boxes in the living room until we could put them in. Installation was scheduled for a Monday. On Sunday, I looked up to see water pouring out of the recessed lights. I raced upstairs to find that the old washer had rusted out and totally flooded the master bath. Again.

And that was before the roof sprang a leak during a storm, swamping rooms three floors down.

Luckily, we love the house, and so do our kids, 7-year-old Olivia and Max, who's 5. Both of them managed to be born between renovations. We'd take a break, then get back to work. They're so used to it, they thought nothing of helping me caulk the post caps the other day when I was fixing up the picket fence.

Yes, we are still working on this house 10 years after we bought it. Believe it or not, we had just finished renovating a house a block away and had no intention of do-



**perked-up paneling** Built by a neighbor's grandfather, the house had a working fireplace set off by hand-painted tiles and cypress paneling. Homeowners Nicole and John added a black frame and, thinking the cypress too dark, painted it yellow. Then Nicole changed her mind and tried to scrape the paint off. The uneven result pleased her so much she decided to keep it, sanding and glazing the surface to create a mottled reddish brown.

ing it again. Then we spotted this lovely 1920s Colonial Revival—in one of Orlando, Florida's oldest and friendliest neighborhoods—on a great lot and near a great school.

Built by our next-door neighbor's grandfather, the house had lots of old-fashioned warmth, with decorative corbels on the exterior, cypress and oak paneling, wide-plank wood-pegged floors, and two working fireplaces, one framed with hand-painted Delft tiles. It also had three

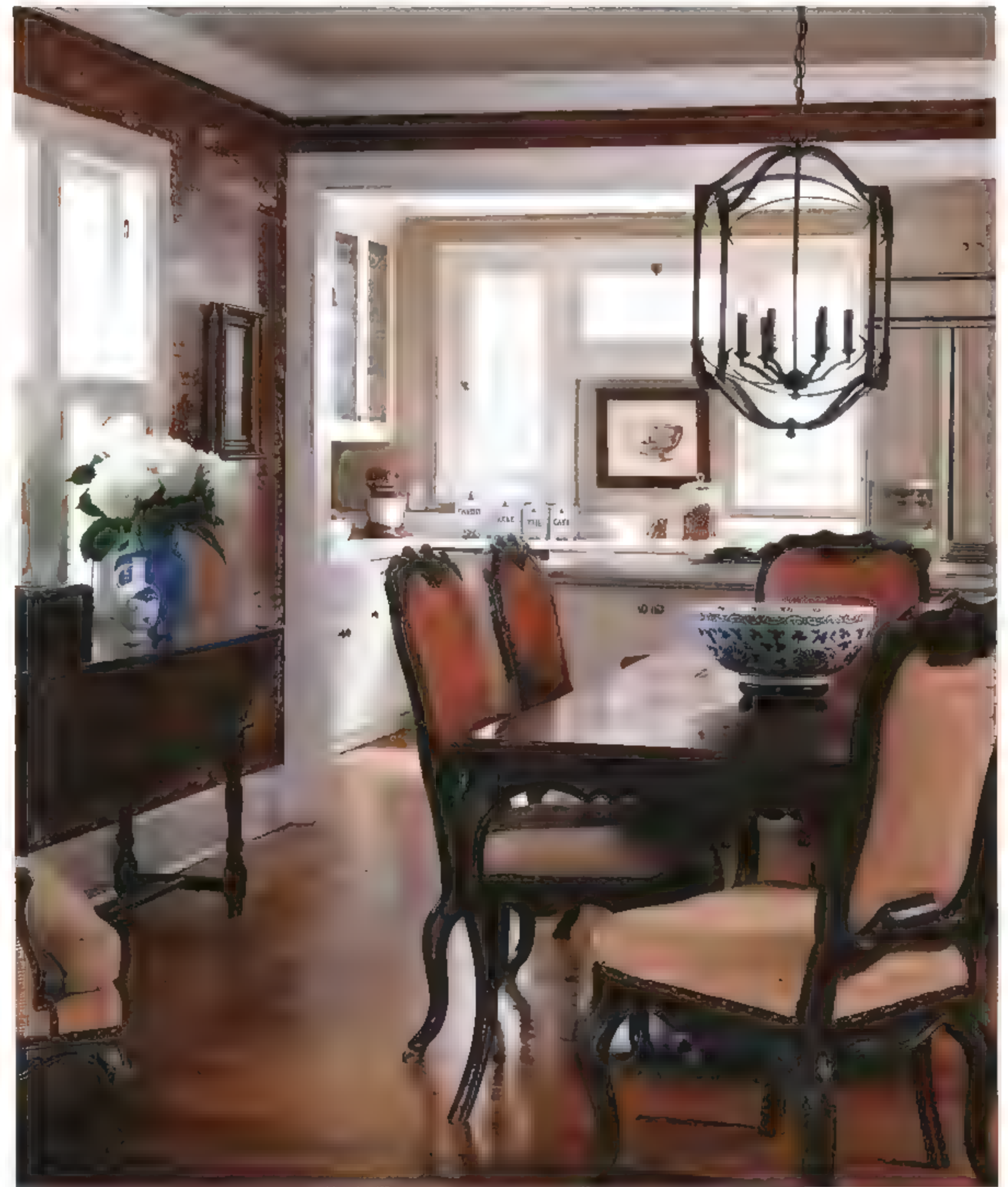
bedrooms, two full baths, and two half baths. But after 70 some years in the Florida sun, it needed work.

Friends and relatives thought we were crazy. "Renovate—again?" they asked. The kitchen was dark and cramped, the bath near the master bedroom needed all-new everything, and the basement had an apparent moisture problem: Plaster was literally falling off the walls.

We were recently married, and another whole-house redo was not

there's  
more  
online!

For a video about our grand-prize winners and a peek at the finalists, go to [thisoldhouse.com/july11](http://thisoldhouse.com/july11)



**making a connection** The kitchen absorbed a dining room with a floor made of 9-inch-wide oak boards framing 5-inch-wide pine boards. New various-size oak boards fit the cooking area and only the two spaces.



in the budget. So that first year, we focused on the kitchen, the bath near the master bedroom, and painting and floor refinishing.

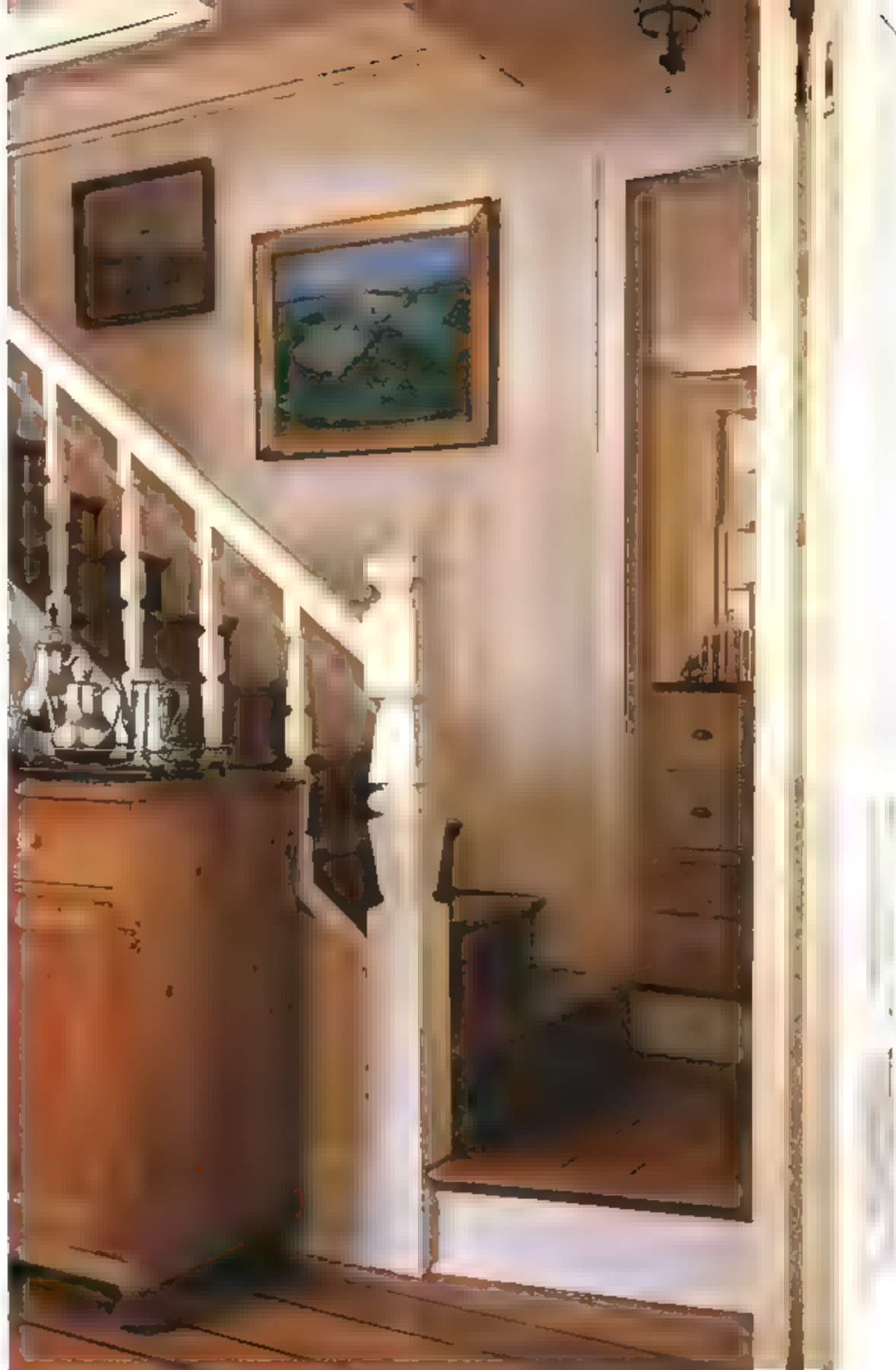
A carpenter who worked on our previous house, Paul Keller, helped us haul out 30-year-old green shag carpeting and tons of junk, helped demolish the kitchen, and then took down the wall between it and the dining room, replacing it with a cased opening.

I always joke that Paul was like the handyman on *Murphy Brown*. He might as well have moved in. When the holidays rolled around, we were all so exhausted we could barely sit up. We had to do something to celebrate Christmas, so the three of us piled into the car and had breakfast at IHOP.

Our neighbors were wonderful. For three months, while we were ripping out linoleum and cracked tile, and eating out of a mini fridge and a microwave set up in the dining room, they came by to commiserate and drop off home-cooked meals.

As the paint coordinator, I experimented quite a bit with color that year. But the big debate was over whether to touch the original horizontal cypress paneling in what had been the dining room. I finally decided it was just too dark, and John added a coat of yellow. Then I woke up in the middle of the night worrying that I'd made a mistake.

The next day, Paul and I grabbed putty knives and scraped off the



***“We learned to be flexible and let the redo evolve. The porch became an office, then a dining room with a vaulted ceiling.”***

paint—or tried to. Amazingly, half way through our efforts we realized we had created this great distressed finish. All it needed was glaze to give it some depth. We still get more compliments on this room than anything else.

About three years after our painting adventures, we were ready

to tackle Phase Two. It was a crazy time, with Olivia less than a year old, but I needed a home office for my real-estate business and Olivia's toys needed a place to park.

This time we brought in a general contractor, Bill Haan, who enclosed the screen porch, adding windows to create an office with a view. He also

rebuilt the stairs to the attic, which we fixed up as a playroom. Our DIY efforts were harder with a newborn in the house but, again, neighbors and our parents came to the rescue, putting us up for weeks so that we could refinish floors and sand old paint without having to sleep with polyurethane fumes and lead dust.

Jump forward three more years. By then we had two kids, and their visiting grandparents needed a more

***lighter, brighter***

Paint and floor refinishing gave the dark-paneled staircase a lift. ABOVE: up two steps and through a doorway sits homeowner Nicole's new home office, a former family room that now has an interior window.



**upgraded living room** A new mantel, masonry surround, and hearth—the latter two made with brick veneer left over from a previous project—enhance the fireplace. Tempered glass replaced the panes in folding French doors, which originally opened onto the porch, now a dining room with a vaulted ceiling.

## what we did

We kept as much of the original 1920s house as possible while opening up and updating the kitchen, upgrading baths, modifying the layout, and creating a guest suite in the basement.

**TIME FRAME** > 10 years

**BIGGEST SETBACK** Three hurricanes in a row. One of them destroyed the original front door. It took us several months to find a company that could replicate it.

**WHERE WE SPLURGED** On our addition, which added 760 square feet to the house, making it more comfortable for us and our guests.







**airy master suite** Generous windows and a vaulted ceiling with a fan help keep light and air moving in the new master bedroom, part of an addition at the back of the house. To save money, the homeowners chose wall-to-wall sisal over hardwood.

private retreat than the guest room upstairs. We eyed the basement, which John, who works in marketing for a medical device company, was using as an office. The setting was hardly conducive: Along with crumbling plaster, he had to deal with a prison-worthy half bath and noises coming out of the ductwork that sounded suspiciously like mice.

Bill Haan agreed to help us again as we turned the basement into a real office and guest quarters. While chipping off plaster with a hammer and chisel, we uncovered a brick wall and decided to leave it exposed, sealing it to keep moisture at bay.

Which brings us to 2010 and Phase Three. With the kids older and building costs down, we decided we could finally go for the addition we had only dreamed of during Phase Two. The addition would add 760 square feet, with a family room below a new master suite.

As part of this project, we turned an upstairs bath into our master bath, complete with a salvaged claw-foot tub. We put down hardwood floors in the kitchen and basement, and turned my office—once a porch, you'll recall—into a vaulted dining room. Then all we had to do was turn the old family room into my office.

Joining us on the last stretch was carpenter Scott Williams, who crafted built-ins for my new office and John's. He also made cabinets that match the kitchen's to line a butler's pantry in the addition.

I could gripe about our last disaster, which involved a burst supply line to the tub and Old Faithful going off in that master bath—unbelievably—once again. But it's more fun to focus on all we've achieved and relax a little. As for our new dining and family rooms and fabulous basement in-laws suite, we take every chance we can to share them. After all, many of our guests were there when we bought the house and bravely declared, "Sure, we can do it again—let's renovate." ■

## how we saved

Between our jobs and two young kids, we had to stretch to meet the demands of our remodel. Here are a few ways we saved:

→ **Worked in stages.** All told, this project took 10 years. By taking our time, we were able to wait for sales, comparison shop, and negotiate with our contractor to keep costs down when we finally decided to build our addition.

→ **Did as much as we could ourselves.** We did our own design work, ripped out a brick floor and chiseled plaster off a wall, installed fixtures and shelves, and did a lot of painting.

→ **Stuck to our budget.** We strove to be realistic and then held to it, avoiding costly change-orders and last-minute spurges.

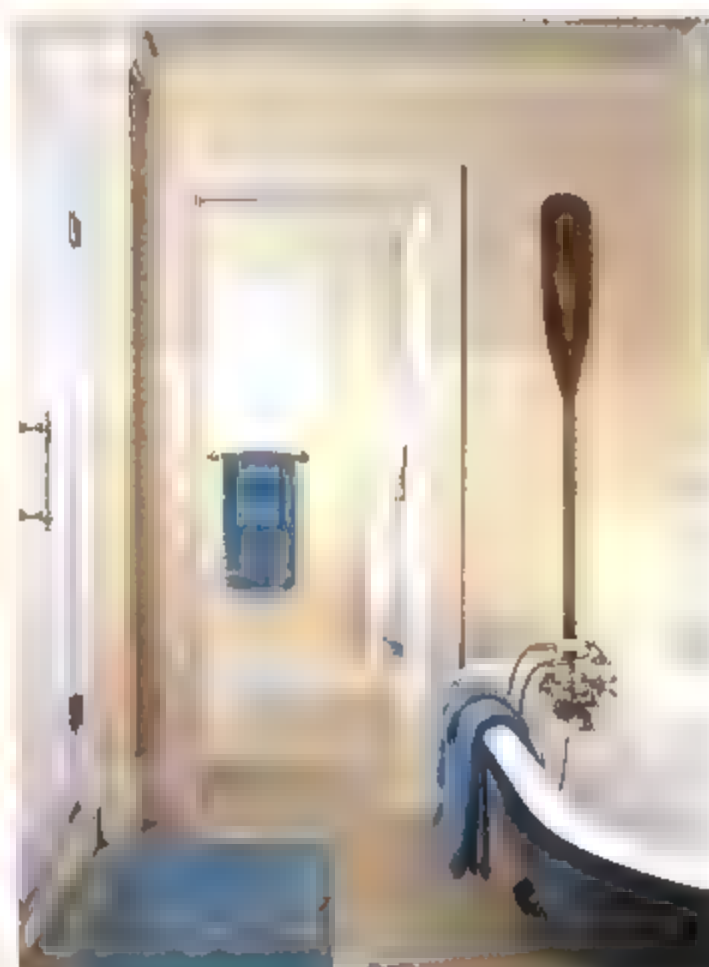
→ **Shopped smart.** We bought half-price floor models at appliance showrooms, asked local stores to match discounts we found online, and patiently waited to buy our wood shutters until we could find an affordable secondhand set that we could restore ourselves.

→ **Salvaged and repurposed.** We found our claw-foot tub in a salvage yard, refinished it, and put it in the kids' bath. The ceiling fan in the master bedroom was a hand-me-down.

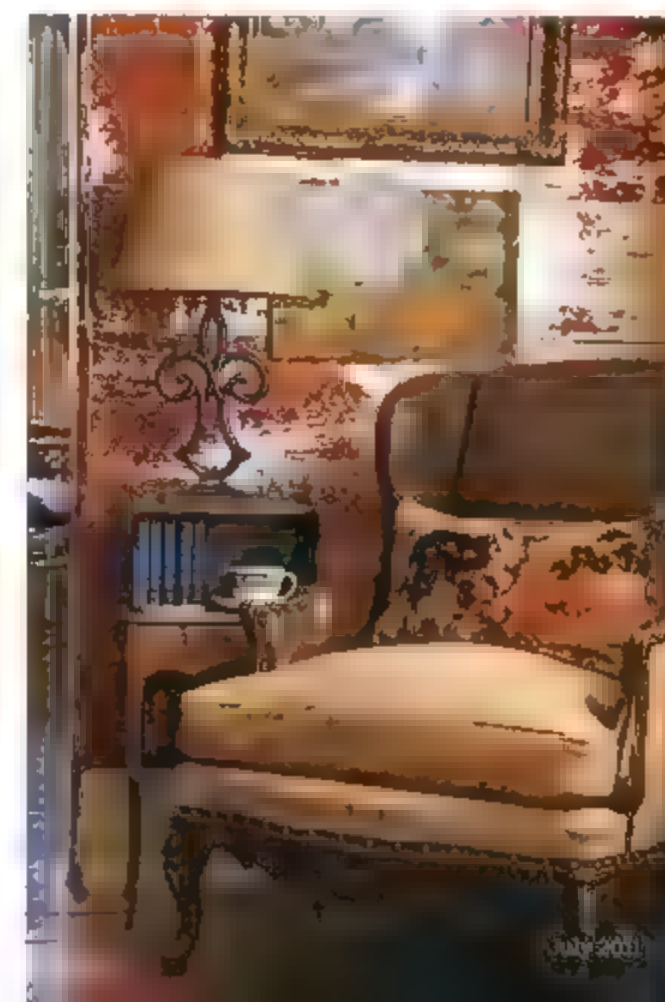
→ **Shamelessly leaned on friends and family.** Neighbors offered meals, temporary housing, and moral support, and our equally wonderful parents stepped up to help with cleaning, repairs—and babysitting, of course. —N.R.



**work in progress** John and Nicole persuaded kids Max and Olivia to help with one last project.



**blending old and new** An original board-and-batten door (LEFT) opens onto the new master suite. The bath (ABOVE) was enlarged to make room for a salvaged claw-foot tub they refinished and painted dark blue.



**finishing touches** Rather than paint an exposed brick wall in the basement (ABOVE), the couple scrubbed and finished it with a moisture-resistant concrete sealer. A reading nook in one corner of the eat-in kitchen area, (LEFT) showcases the refinished floor and a "botched" paint job that gave the cypress paneling its nicely weathered look.



# one-room wonders

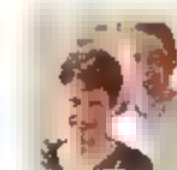
Five resourceful readers won \$1,000 each for these clever makeovers

**PLUS** THE Moxie Awards



BEST  
*kitchen*  
REDO

**"I'd never built cabinets"**



**WHO** • Nancy and Gregg Alling  
**WHERE** • Toledo, Ohio  
**WHAT THEY DID** • Custom-built nearly every element

in their updated traditional kitchen  
**WHY THEY WON** • They stayed on budget (if not on schedule) and achieved a workable layout while designing on the fly.  
**HIS STORY** • "Nancy agreed to buy our 1968 house if I remodeled the kitchen within the first year. It was the original kitchen, boxed in and cramped. We had a modest budget, and when I found out how expensive cabinets were, I decided to make them myself. I'd never built kitchen cabinets, but I've done lots of woodworking, so I figured I'd get the hang of it. It was very time-consuming to cut and assemble the pieces and make all the joinery, but I stuck to it. I built the boxes, doors, and drawers, incorporating niches for our microwave, fridge, and TV, and adding special drawers for cookware, lids, even Tupperware. All the cabinets are hand painted. Instead of

replacing the window above the sink, I added muntins that match the ones I routed for the glass-front cabinets. I also made the black walnut countertops and finished them with stain and 10 coats of varnish. It took a full five years to finish. Nancy did some great cooking with the kitchen all ripped up!"



{ before }

► **tour these projects—and others**

See video walk-throughs of the winners, and pictures of more one-room remodels, at [thisoldhouse.com/july11](http://thisoldhouse.com/july11)

**before** The 1960s kitchen was dark and dated. **after** The owners gutted and slowly rebuilt it, adding homemade cabinets, counters, and dozens of custom touches.



## BEST exterior MAKEOVER



### "We worked as a family"



WHO > **Brian and Julie Wells**

WHERE > Oxford, Md.

WHAT THEY DID > Lovingly restored a fire- and hurricane-damaged 1880s cottage in a historic district.

WHY THEY WON > Many felt this endangered property was a lost cause, but the Wells family never gave up on it. **HER STORY** > "Brian and I always dreamed of fixing up an old house, but we waited until our three sons, Branden, Sean, and Evan, were old enough to help out. When we bought this house, in 2008, many of the clapboards were rotted or had been ruined by a fire, and overgrown holly trees obscured the facade. We worked on it for two years; our aim was to make the exterior historically accurate and to reuse original materials wherever possible."

"Brian is handy and has taught us all DIY skills, but this house involved many projects none of us had ever tackled. We replaced clapboards where needed and freshened up the original yellow color. We found a secondhand double-tombstone front door for only \$75, which Brian cut to size. He also fixed the original window boxes, filling in damaged wood with new profiles he routed. Together we built soffits and fascia, replaced corrugated metal gutters with half round ones, and erected a brick chimney. Sean dug the foundation for the new front steps; Evan chopped down the holly trees, enduring scratches from the sharp foliage; and Branden tackled overgrown arborvitaes in back."

"Making this house livable again has been so gratifying. The project always brings back many memories, like when Evan says, 'I never want to cut down a holly tree again.'"



**before** After a fire ripped through this 1880s cottage in 2005, it sat empty and fell into worse disrepair.

**after** The Wells family spent weekend after weekend restoring the facade and improving the landscaping. "We even used a car jack to lift the house so we could shore up the foundation in the back," says Julie.

## BEST bath REDO

### "It's our oasis"



WHO > **Ronda and Les Batchelor**

WHERE > Magna, Utah

WHAT THEY DID >

Gracefully updated a builder-grade master bath with big box bargains, retroed salvage finds, and scraps from other projects.

WHY THEY WON > For a mere \$1,200, they nailed an elegant vintage look by adding custom touches to off-the-shelf items.

HER STORY > "Our master bath lacked storage and style, so we decided to revamp it. My husband and I have remodeled many rooms together. I come up with the ideas, Les builds things in his shop, and together we handle installation and finish work."

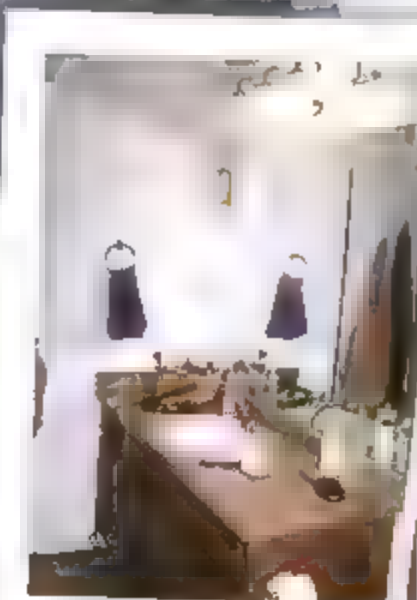
"Our low budget forced us to be creative. I saw a recessed medicine cabinet in *This Old House* that I loved, but I didn't want to pay top dollar. So we built one instead, creating a box that fit between the wall studs. Les also made the mirrored cabinet doors. We topped the piece with salvaged molding, painted it white, and finished it off with vintage-style chrome latches."

"To dress up the walls, we put up beadboard wainscoting and painted the walls above it. We tore out the vinyl floor and laid octagonal mosaic tile. For visual



variety, I replaced a handful of squares in the pattern with gray glass ones."

"We built the vanity with medium-density fiberboard, wood veneer, and secondhand cabinet and drawer fronts that cost \$1 apiece. I scored a marble countertop with sink cutouts at a salvage shop for only \$10 and had a stoneworker cut the slab to size and drill faucet holes. Finally, we painted and distressed the piece and added bun feet and knobs. It took a year, but the bath is now an oasis from all our other unfinished projects."



**before** Short on storage and personality, this master bath had a case of the blahs. **after** Sweat equity and well-priced, repurposed vintage finds make this simple bath a charming retreat.



## BEST backyard REDO

**"We beat the insects"**



**WHO** > Karl Jungbluth  
**WHERE** > Boone, Iowa  
**WHAT HE DID** > Built a screened-in retreat for eating and entertaining.

**WHY HE WON** > Combined a design based on easy-care home-center materials with handmade finishing touches.  
**HER STORY** > "My wife, Carmen, and I love the outdoors. We garden, watch birds, and entertain on our deck. But the past few summers have been rainy, and the mosquitoes have been relentless. We'd try to eat dinner outside, only to retreat into the house. We decided a screened-in room was the best way to solve the problem and would also provide a focal point in our garden. I felt confident we could tackle this project, as I grew up on a farm and Carmen and I often volunteer for Habitat for Humanity."

"We began by creating a scrapbook of ideas from magazines and websites. The design is meant to be durable and low cost. It features beefy 6-by-6-inch corner posts, a composite deck floor, and a metal roof. The entire structure is made from off-the-shelf pressure-treated lumber. I sized the room to keep cuts and waste to a minimum, so it's 16 feet long and 12 feet wide, to conform



with the length of the boards and joists. "Our cast-iron table is now the perfect spot for alfresco dinners, but it was in terrible shape when we first saw it at a farm auction. We could see its potential, though. For the metal parts, I scraped off several layers of paint and sprayed on a fresh coat. I also removed the stained, warped linoleum tabletop, and spent a couple of hours sanding

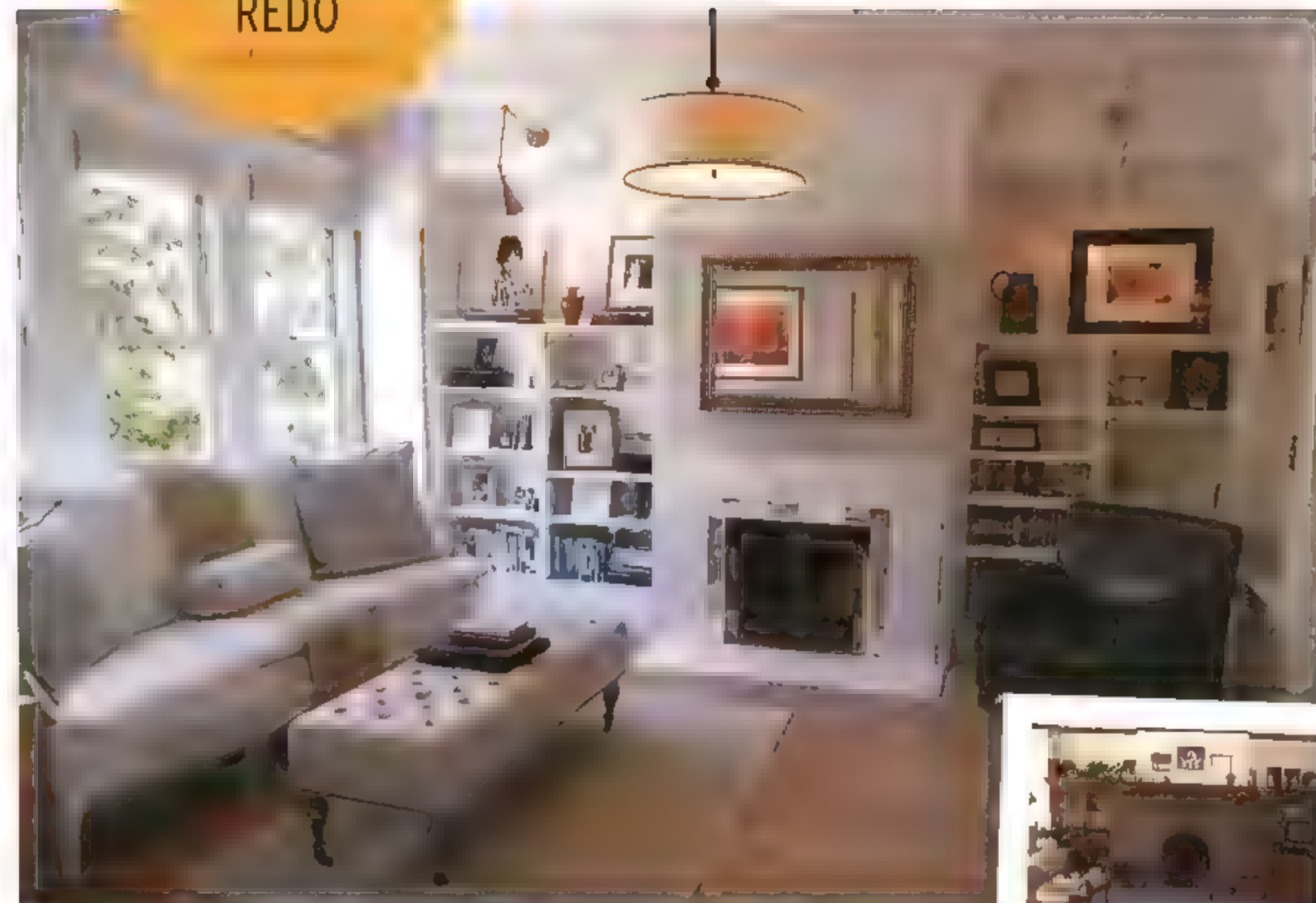
down a piece of white oak for the new top. "The finishing touch is the door, inspired by the huge oak trees in our yard. After sketching the design, I cut out two versions with a jigsaw and rounded the edges with a router. The screen is sandwiched between the two layers. Now we can sit outside here all summer long without getting snacked on—it's a real relief."



{ before }

**before** The three-acre property, which gets very buggy in summertime, was generous in size but lacked a focal point.  
**after** The screened-in room keeps out even the smallest insects, making it a perfect spot for meals and bird watching.

## BEST living room REDO



{ before }



**"I tweaked until it was perfect"**



**WHO** > Jenna Miller Pelaez  
**WHERE** > San Francisco  
**WHAT SHE DID** > Turned a dark, dated living room into a light-filled, stylish retreat.  
**WHY SHE WON** > Spent countless hours

designing every detail of this complete overhaul.  
**HER STORY** > "I couldn't bear our old living room, with its awful green-brown trim and heavy stone fireplace. With limited cash and moderate DIY skills, my husband and I set out to return the space to its former glory. We worked for a year to restore the original pocket doors, strip paint off hardware, and rip out the carpet to reveal stunning pale maple floors. I learned it was crucial to find every single staple holding down the carpet or else later

you'd end up stepping on the ones you missed!"

"I wanted the fireplace to have a contemporary look, so I opted for white glass tile with mirrored trim. I made a template of the surround and laid out the design over and over, tweaking the arrangement until I got it just right. I made many mistakes along the way, such as changing the tile size, which left me scrambling for enough material! I also designed the built-in shelves; it took ages to figure out how tall they should be, how to configure the shelving, and where to add lighting. We had a contractor build the coved arches above them to emphasize the height of the ceiling.

"For furnishings, I scoured junkyards, flea markets, and Craigslist. But I did splurge on a few new items, like the tufted ottoman. I love how our living room turned out."

**before** The hunking stone hearth and heavy woodwork gave this room the look of a dated mountain lodge.  
**after** White tile and matching built-ins lighten up the fireplace wall and a neutral color palette pulls the space together.



# THE Moxie Awards

## most impressive job prep

**WHO** Tyler Ely **WHERE** Pittsburgh  
**MOXIE MEASURE** Tyler Ely and his wife Susan fled the suburbs when the youngest child left for college. "We fell in love with an old rowhouse," he says. Though they wanted to strip the paint off the house's stone facade, the cost of hiring a pro for the job proved too steep for their budget. So Tyler fashioned a 30-foot tall scaffolding system from stock lumber and did the job himself. "The neighborhood snickered about the crazy guy who built his own scaffolding," he says. But the structure held up just fine, and those who once laughed now laud his restoration efforts.



## best comeback

**WHO** Roberta Evans  
**WHERE** Champlin, Minn.  
**MOXIE MEASURE** When novice DIYer Roberta Evans began renovating her bathroom, she fell off a ladder and dislocated her shoulder. For most people, this would have put an end to the hands-on work. Not so for Roberta. After a year on the mend, the plucky 63-year-old set out to finish the job she started: demolishing an old linen closet, tearing out a vanity, removing tile, and relocating an interior wall that separated the toilet and shower. "I moved all the plumbing from this spot to an inside wall," the intrepid renovator told us. Finally, she put up drywall, retiled the walls and floor, and installed a new shower, toilet, and vanity—this time without suffering so much as a scratch.



## most visionary carpenter

**WHO** Dean Pedersen **WHERE** Valley City, N. Dak.  
**MOXIE MEASURE** During the Vietnam War, a hand grenade cost Dean Pedersen his sight. When he returned home, he briefly considered other careers before deciding to pursue his dream job: carpentry. "There's something very satisfying about restoring an old treasure to its former beauty," he says. Now in his 39th year as owner of Pedersen Wood Craft, Dean's work would put carpenters with 20/20 vision to shame. Using a combination of tried-and-true templates and special tools, such as a talking tape measure and a table saw that shuts down when it comes into contact with human skin, Dean builds and restores everything from rocking chairs to the fireplace mantel (RIGHT) he refinished for his son, Matthew. An assistant stains each piece, but Dean handles construction, sanding, and hand varnishing by himself. "My father is a legend in this town," Matthew says.



## best beginner effort

**WHO** M. David Bostic  
**WHERE** Warsaw, Va.  
**MOXIE MEASURE** Moving a house takes a lot of gumption. Moving two houses and combining them into a single one, without having any prior DIY experience? That's bordering on crazy. But reader M. David Bostic is happy to accept the challenge. Between 2006 and 2007, he dismantled two dilapidated timber-frame farmhouses (one built in 1772, the other in 1820), hauled them to Virginia's Northern Neck region, and reconstructed them into a family homestead. The 1820 house serves as the facade, while the 1772 house was attached as an "L" addition in back. With lots of help from loved ones, he did all the framing, roofing, flooring, and finish work. He also re-sited both houses with cedar, then painted them to match. "Best of all, the house is made 90 percent from original materials," he says.



## best pinch-hitter

**WHO** June Markum  
**WHERE** Wynnewood, Okla.  
**MOXIE MEASURE** June and Eugene Markum couldn't wait to get started on an ambitious landscaping project: a pond surrounded by fieldstones, which they hoped would transform their boring backyard into a calming oasis. But, just after they'd gathered three 16-foot trailerloads of stones, Eugene suffered a heart attack. "The doctors told him he shouldn't lift anything heavier than 50 pounds—anything at all, really," says June. That meant she faced a choice: Give up the dream of the pond or get busy digging dirt and setting the heavy, bulky stones by herself. Undaunted, the 66-year-old June forged ahead, working six days a week to complete the job solo. "It took me three months to dig the hole for the pond and nine months to lay the fieldstones," recalls June, who would pry each unwieldy rock off the ground with a shovel, stand it on its side, then roll it to its final location. "It was hard work, but I enjoyed every day of it."



## best follow-through

**WHO** Christine Reed **WHERE** Excelsior, Minn.  
**MOXIE MEASURE** Christine Reed felt pretty confident when she and her contractor-fiancé decided to buy a fixer-upper in 2009. He knew how to do every project the house needed, she says. But soon after the closing, the couple split, leaving Christine with a lot of DIY work left to do. "The house had had many delusional owners who thought they could remodel with one hand while the other hand held a beer," she says. But when the going gets tough, the tough pull out the toolbox and get cracking. The now single Christine finished many projects on her own, such as tiling the kitchen backsplash and mortaring a fireplace, and got help from family and friends with others, such as building soffits and putting in lighting. She now suffers from full-blown remodeler's disease. "I'm thinking of restoring a Victorian next time," she quips. ■



you never  
cease to  
amaze  
us!



# 28 READER TIPS

## that save time and money

We can learn a lot from you, our many ingenious readers. When faced with home improvement problems, you resist the urge to rush off to the hardware store and instead dream up novel solutions to get the job done quickly and cheaply. Your creativity, on full display here, is an inspiration to TOH fans everywhere. PHOTOGRAPHS BY Ian Spanier STYLING BY Karin Olsen



### 1 Detail stainer

I like to use a cheap spray bottle from a discount store to stain the tight,

difficult-to-get-at parts of a lattice. It works great, and when I'm done I just dispose of the bottle.

—Chris Huang, Lafayette, Ind.

### 2 Paneling disguise

Instead of painting directly over old wall paneling, I filled the grooves with joint compound, then troweled it to achieve a stucco look. When I painted it—wow!—you'd never know it was paneling.

—Patty Studdard, Cookeville, Tenn.

### 3 Push-pin pilot holes

Those thin strips of fancy trim always seem to split when I nail them up. Now I use a push pin to make a small pilot hole for a nail, and it has saved me a lot of wood and frustration.

—Timothy Hays Sr., Middlefield, Mass.



### 4 Fabric-store tile trimmer

While I was redoing our bathroom floor, I found it difficult

to cut vinyl floor tiles with a utility knife. So I got out my rotary fabric cutter. It worked like a charm and was easy on my hands.

—Carole Cruse, Egg Harbor Township, N.J.

### 5 Ballpoint nozzle extender

If the tip of a caulk tube nozzle isn't long enough to reach into a corner, I take apart one of my old pens and attach the lower barrel to the tube's nozzle with electrical tape. The additional 2 to 3 inches of nozzle saves me from having to apply the caulk with my fingers.

—Gary Dickinson, North Haven, Conn.

### 6 Carpet-scrap knee pads

To protect my bad knees while I refinished the floor, I cut 8-by-8-inch squares out of the carpeting I had removed and stacked two pieces together, plush side down, for each knee. They were soft, slid easily on the wood floor, and picked up extra dust as I scooted around.

—Sheila Kitzman,

Mendota Heights, Minn.



### 7 Plastic-pipe profile sander

To speed up sanding the inside curves of crown moldings, I

made a profile sander out of a PVC tee fitting and foam pipe insulation. The foam, which is glued to the tee with spray adhesive, overhangs the ends of the fitting to stop gouging. Stick self-adhesive sandpaper to the foam and go to town. I mounted mine on an oscillating sander.

—Mark Collins, Centennial, Colo.

### 8 Back-saving technique

When I'm spreading grout on a floor, I use two floats—one in each hand—so that I'm always supported by one float held flat on the tile while the other hand works the grout. This allows me to work either left- or right-handed and reach farther with the float, and makes the job much easier on my back.

—Aaron McCray, Beaverton, Oreg.

### 9 Splatter stopper

Whenever I mix 5-gallon buckets of paint with a drill and paddle attachment, I put the paddle's shaft through a hole in a large cardboard square before attaching the shaft to the drill. Then I lay the cardboard directly on the container before turning on the drill. No splatters!

—Tracy Thompson, Marion, Va.

### 10 Tidy patio joint filler

Here's an easy way to fill joints between pavers or patio flagstones. Simply take an empty screw-top wine bottle and punch a hole in the top of the cap near its edge. Fill the bottle with sand, mortar mix, or polymeric sand, screw on the cap, and pour the contents into the joints rather than on the pavers. There's no waste and no cleanup.

—Sid Galbraith, Walton, Ky.



### 11 Photographic memory aid

When I'm taking apart something that I need to put back

together, I take pictures at each step of the disassembly. Then I arrange the photos in reverse order to see step by step how to reassemble it.

—Cristina Beck, Temperance, Mich.

### 12 Tire reviver

Here's a quick way to inflate any small, pneumatic tire after it's gone





flat. Tie a rope tightly around the circumference of the tire, then use plumber's putty to seal the edge where the rubber meets the wheel rim. Now you can pump up the tire and untie the rope. Simple as that.

*Ken Marsnall, Rockford, Ill.*



### 13 Door stack-drying trick

We wanted to paint all 20 doors in the house, but where do you put them while they're wet? By screwing short 2x4 blocks to the ends, we were able to paint both sides of each door and then stack them neatly while they dried. Just make sure to keep the same spacing between every pair of blocks.

*Charles Sapp, St. Charles, Mo*

### 14 | New path from old stone

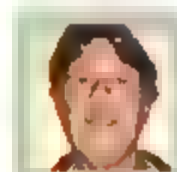
I made a brand new looking flagstone pathway to my gazebo

16



just by flipping over the weathered stones that were there and washing them off. The tricky part was fitting the shapes back together, but with a little finessing I managed it.

*Larry Koch, Pomona, Calif*



### 15 | Of tee bolts and toilet bowls

When installing a toilet bowl, mark a line on the threaded ends of the tee bolts to show the orientation of the tees on the bolts' other end, which hold the bowl to the flange on the floor. Without that mark as a guide, you could turn the bolt 90 degrees as you tighten it and pull it out of the flange, making a mess of the wax ring. Trust me: I learned this one the hard way.

*> Donald Atevas, Patchogue, N.Y.*

### 16 Hand protection

I reuse those long, narrow plastic bags that newspapers are delivered in as protective gloves and sleeves when spray painting and pulling weeds. They're really good for uprooting and containing poison ivy and other stuff you shouldn't touch with bare hands; just remove the bags by pulling them inside out.

*Cyndy Smith, Nicholasville, Ky.*

### 17 Toilet drier

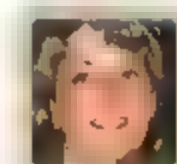
Before I have to work on a toilet, I use a wet vac to suck out all of the water from the bowl and tank. No muss, no fuss.

*> John Palka, West Chester, Pa*

### 18 | Grass saver

Put a window screen over a spot in your lawn that you're reseeding and you won't have to worry about birds eating the seeds.

*James Murphy, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.*



### 19 | Vacuum out clogs

The plumber couldn't budge the clog in our upstairs bathtub drain, so he said we'd have to tear out the ceiling below in order to get at the pipe. But a contractor we know had another idea that made a lot more sense. He stuck the nozzle of a wet-dry vac into a roll of electrical tape to get a tight seal against the tub's drain, and covered the tub's overflow hole with a flexible rubber pad. Then he turned on the vacuum and, voila: the clog was sucked out of the pipe, saving our ceiling—and our bank account.

*> Laura Mozier, Fairfield, Conn.*

### 20 Preventing stuck bulbs

Screw-in bulbs in outdoor fixtures can corrode and become stuck in their sockets, and will often break when you try to twist them out. That's why I rub Vaseline on the bulbs' threads before screwing them in. I never have a problem replacing the bulb when the time comes.

*> Denis Niederbach, Guntersville, Ala.*



### 21 Knot loosener

The next time you have an impossible-to-loosen knot, try giving it a squirt or two of spray lubricant, the kind meant for rusty nuts and bolts. Knots in nylon and other synthetic rope come loose as if by magic.

*> Steve Davis, Sackets Harbor, N.Y.*

### 22 | Brush conditioner

To keep my synthetic-bristle brushes in good shape after cleaning, I rub them with hair conditioner stored in a handy



hotel-size bottle. And I always rinse them out before using them again.

*> Kyle Adams, Huntsville, Tex.*



### 23 Pastry bag for epoxy

When I need to put two-part epoxy precisely in cracks or holes, I squirt both parts into the corner of a sandwich bag, twist it up like a cake-frosting bag, then roll it around between my fingers to mix it up. Once both parts are blended, I clip a tiny hole in the bag's corner and squeeze the epoxy out.

*> Carl Anderson, Floresville, Tex.*

### 24 Fillers for stripped holes

I save the ends cut from nylon cable ties to fill stripped screw holes or to anchor screws when I hang things on a concrete, tile, or plaster wall. They hold better than matchsticks and don't splinter. For best results, place the ties' notched sides out, against the side of the hole.

*> Jon Doucett, Cincinnati*



### 25 Foam flood-proofing

A local man who was trying to prevent a flood from filling his house sealed his door and basement windows with a can of spray-foam insulation. There will be some cleanup to unseal the door, but the foam did stop water that rose 40 inches high.

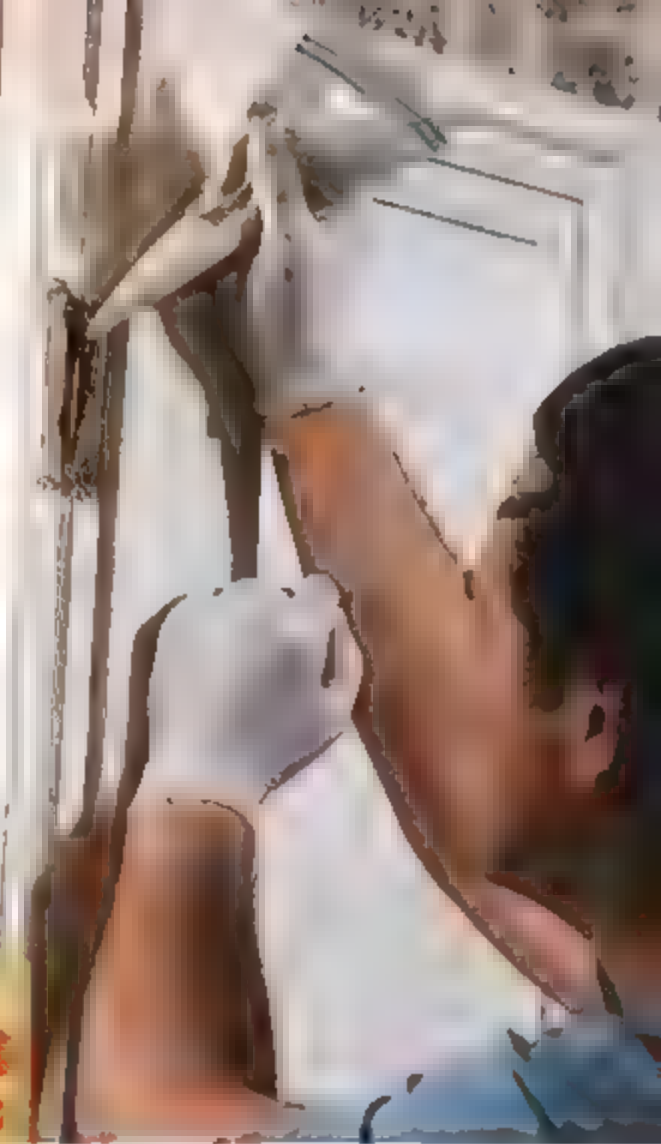
*> John McMonagle, Broomall, Pa*

### 26 Paint-can scrapers

While stripping paint from an old crib, I found that my store-bought scraper couldn't get in some of the small profiles. So I cut up a flat-sided plastic paint can into custom scrapers that fit each problem profile, saving myself a few dollars and another trip to the store.

*> Eric Haskins, Wahiawa, Hawaii*

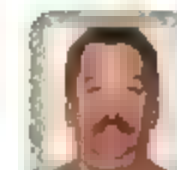
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### 27 Handrail supports

If the drywall has crumbled under stairway handrail brackets, take them off and cut out the damaged drywall using a hole saw slightly smaller than the brackets' bases. Use the same hole saw to cut plugs out of 1/2-inch plywood; put one plug in each hole. Reattach the brackets through the plugs into the studs. The plywood provides a much firmer foundation than drywall.

*> Jiri Klimovsky, East Moriches, N.Y.*



### 28 Rebar sinker

Next time you want to sink rebar into the ground, don't pound on it with a hammer. Instead, chuck the rod into a drill and drive it in like a screw. (It helps if you soften the ground first by pouring a little water on it.) The rebar spins in easily and doesn't get bent or beat up from hammering. And if it hits an obstruction, such as a sewer pipe, you'll feel it before you break anything.

*> Richard Bryson, St. Bernard, La. ■*

wait, there's more  
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#### BEDROOM

### a reading spot with a view

THE INSPIRATION > "Sitting Pretty," December 2009

THE ADAPTATION > "Our daughter Molly wanted a window seat that looked out over our yard," says Lynn. The one Lynn and Angie conceived incorporates beadboard below the seat. Like the project in our story (RIGHT) but in the form of cabinet doors so that Molly can store craft supplies inside. The 7-foot-long seat was made from birch plywood painted to match the bedroom's trim and finished with a colorful cushion and throw pillows. Built-in seating is a traditional old-house touch," says Angie. "It emphasizes the room's architecture and acts as a handsome focal point."



PHOTO: MARY ANN HES

BY Deborah Snoonian  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY Bob Stefko  
STYLING BY Susan Victoria

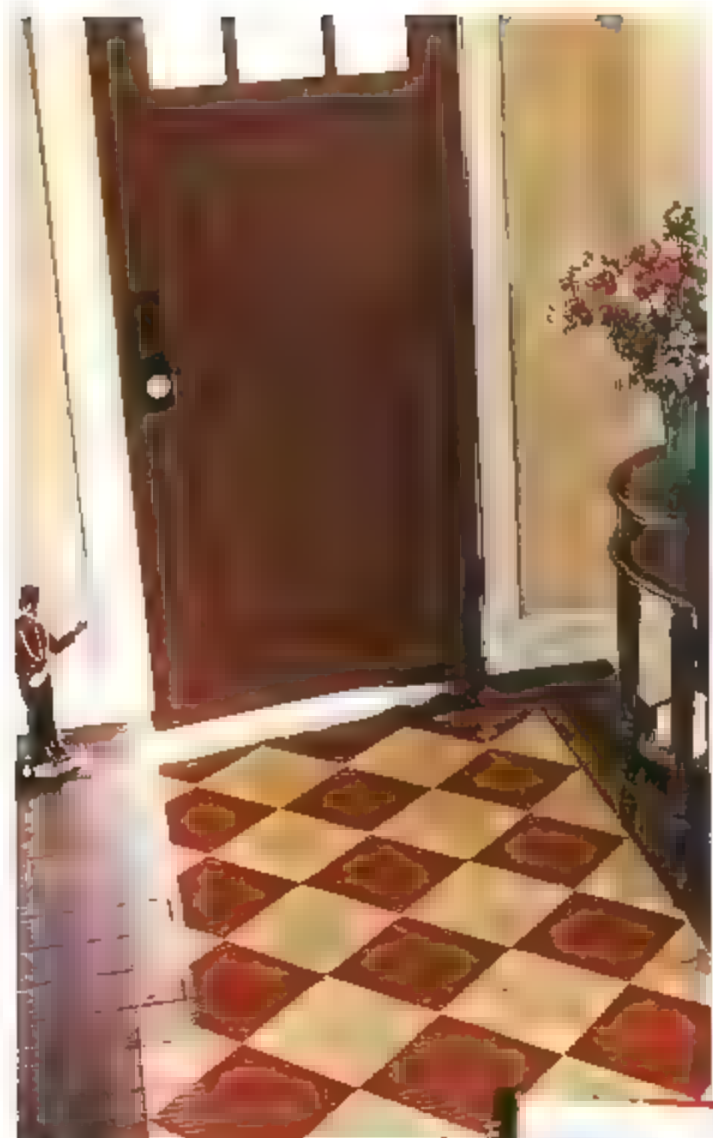
1 Reader (  )  
+ 7 (  ) Issues =

## A new house with old-house charm

she let  
TOH  
magazine  
be her  
guide

**Ever since she was** a little girl, living in a bungalow with a claw-foot tub, glass doorknobs, and handsome woodwork, Lynn Schnitz of Jefferson City, Missouri, has had a soft spot for period homes. She and her husband, Dan, dreamed of buying a turn-of-the-century farmhouse, yet after looking at several, they couldn't find one with the right features, in the right neighborhood, at the right price. "We decided to build from scratch, but the last thing I wanted was a generic-looking house without any character," she says. So as plans got underway, the builder's staff interior designer, Angie Zimmermann, showed Lynn some copies of *This Old House*. It was, as they say, the beginning of a beautiful friendship. Together, Lynn and Angie tore out pictures, drafted designs, and with the help of a talented carpenter and a cabinetmaker, brought the ideas Lynn loved in our pages to life. Here, how they tailored each published project to give Lynn's new home the vintage appeal she'd always wanted.





#### ENTRY FOYER

### a painted rug to greet guests

THE INSPIRATION > "Paint a Floor," June 2009

THE ADAPTATION > Lynn had always liked the look of painted wood floors, a tradition that goes back centuries, but it was the combination of a classic checkerboard pattern paired with step-by-step information that inspired her to try this at home. "Angie and I came up with the idea of making an area rug in the entry," says Lynn. Angie sketched a design featuring 9½-inch squares framed by a border done in russet red and cream to match the palette of the adjacent living room. The paint was applied directly onto Lynn's prefinished, hand-scraped hardwood floors. First the boards were sanded, primed, and sanded again to help the paint adhere; once dry, the painted "rug" was sanded again, coated with a semitransparent stain, and varnished to give it an aged patina. "It's a real conversation piece," says Lynn. And it even hides a little bit of wear and tear on the floor.



Homeowner Lynn Schmitz, left, and interior designer Angie Zimmermann pored over plans, tore out pages from *This Old House*, and sketched designs for the projects Lynn liked. "We altered each one to suit the house and meet my family's needs," says Lynn.



#### KITCHEN

### retro touches, handsome details

THE INSPIRATION > "Updated Decor: Effortless Style," March 2010 and "Schoolhouse Lights," July/August 2009

THE ADAPTATION > Lynn's kitchen isn't exactly a dead ringer for the one she liked in our March 2010 issue. But the story led her to the right materials, fixtures, and finishes: a farmhouse sink, bridge faucet, marble backsplash, dark wood cabinets and countertop, and pendant lights (she opted for schoolhouse-style versions after seeing them in our Shopping column). "All I knew about the kitchen was that I wanted white cabinets. The other choices I had to make felt overwhelming," she says. Seeing product options in a kitchen setting—not a catalog—streamlined my decision-making.





#### MUDROOM

### a drop spot for coats and bags

THE INSPIRATION: "Build a Mudroom Bench," September 2009

THE ADAPTATION: The Schmitz family usually

comes into the house through the garage, a convenient spot to shed outerwear. "For an area that's private like this, an open storage unit keeps everyone's gear organized without having to reach into a dark closet," says Angie. Lynn's mudroom bench features a beadboard back and a row of hooks, like the one in our story. But she skipped the top shelf and added deep storage drawers with bins inside of a flip-top seat. To contrast with the adjacent pale walls, the birch bench got a base coat of red paint and a top coat of black paint that was wiped away in spots to reveal hints of red beneath. "This piece of furniture has saved me so much cleanup time. No one tracks in dirt anymore!" says Lynn. The bench even has extra cubbies and cupboard space on the back side for kids Molly, Ethan, and Libby.

#### PANTRY

### a door that feels open when closed

THE INSPIRATION: "Screened-in Pantry," September 2009

THE ADAPTATION: Three years before building her house, Lynn had picked up a couple of vintage-style screen doors at a home center for \$15 apiece. "I knew I wanted to use them, but I wasn't sure how," she says. When she saw this story, she pointed to the page and told Angie, "Here's my answer." The door got a coat of stain and new hardware, and the pantry's opening was simply built to fit. "It gives the kitchen a casual outdoorsy feel," says Angie. "Plus you can easily glance right in and see if you're running low on anything." The second screen door was installed in a bedroom closet for 3-year-old Libby, as an added touch of whimsy in her room.



#### LAUNDRY ROOM

### a sophisticated look for a utility space

THE INSPIRATION: "Dressed-up Laundry Room," April 2009

THE ADAPTATION: "The color of the cabinets, the paint on the walls, the black-and-white flooring—it's all straight from the story," says Angie. While that's true of the paint colors, the look-alike checkerboard flooring in Lynn's laundry room isn't the vinyl tile we'd shown but, rather, durable sheet flooring made of vinyl and fiberglass, with a foam cushioning layer for extra comfort and warmth. Lynn chose a glass entry door and adopted the room's gallery-style layout, too, but went a step further and made the space more functional by adding a closet bar next to the washer and dryer for hanging drip-dry clothing. Above the laundry machines, instead of putting in beadboard and open shelving with baskets, she installed custom cabinets overhead to keep supplies fully out of sight. A separate cabinet and drawer conceal handy features like a laundry chute and a pull-out ironing board. "This room was the first one I knew I wanted to copy almost exactly from the magazine," says Lynn. "And even though our house is finished, we're still building projects from your pages." Glad to be of service, Lynn. ■

#### see more of her home

Get a video tour of Lynn's house and find instructions for making these projects at [thisoldhouse.com/july11](http://thisoldhouse.com/july11)





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# ask this old house

inside

REGLAZING TIPS

SMELLY AIR CLEANER

FAUCET FIX

MORE



WHO Chris Nowicki

WHERE Needham, Mass.

WHAT "I collect old tools. I found this one at a local flea market."

## Q What was this tool used for?

It's an old-fashioned soldering iron, also called a soldering copper, after the polky hunk of metal at its business end. He used it in a fire pit with a blowtorch, and he used it to touch a stick of solder on the end of a pipe. The stick instantly melts and flows down to fill the hole.

31 tips, tricks, and answers to your home-improvement questions

PHOTOGRAPH BY TED MORRISON

READER-CREATED ISSUE | THEOLDHOUSE.COM



## → Our cast of veteran experts



**TOM SILVA**  
General Contractor



**NORM ABRAM**  
Master Carpenter



**RICHARD TRETHEWEY**  
Plumbing and Heating Expert



**ROGER COOK**  
Landscape Contractor



**KEVIN O'CONNOR**  
Host

For this annual reader-created edition of Ask This Old House, we've asked Tom, Norm, Richard, Roger, and Kevin to step aside and let our crowd of online experts provide the answers to questions submitted to the TOH discussion boards. (The odd names in quotes are "handles.") This online community stands ready to help you too with your burning home-improvement questions. Log on any time to [advice.thisoldhouse.com](http://advice.thisoldhouse.com) when you're looking for their advice, sympathy, and support.

**"mnorman" asks:**

**My wood windows have glazing putty only on the outside. Should I reglaze them that way—just on one side?**



**"Sombreuil\_mongrel" replies:**

You'll get a much better job if you remove the glass so you can bed it in putty before doing the outside. For one thing, the glass won't rattle. Also, it will stop interior condensation that runs down the inside from getting under the exterior putty and causing it to pull away from the wood.

My only other recommendation would be to apply some boiled linseed oil or alkyd primer to the rabbet—the ledge the glass sits on—before you lay in any putty. This will help the putty adhere even better.

**Norm Abram comments:** Yes, bedding glass in glazing compound is a must, for all the reasons given. So is sealing the rabbet. For a painted sash, I brush on primer; for a stained sash, I use boiled linseed oil because it's hard to keep primer from getting on the inside of the sash.

Priming the wood doesn't actually provide better adhesion; it prevents the wood from absorbing the oils in the glazing compound and making it turn brittle over time.

One more thing: The terms *putty* and *glazing compound* are commonly interchangeable, but not all

Before placing a pane of glass into a wood sash, press glazing compound into the sash's rabbet to ensure a tight seal between the wood and glass.

putty is suitable for glazing wood windows. Be sure to get a product specifically formulated for such use.

**"cisco.j" asks:**  
**Can I stop rain from going behind my gutters?**

I had my roof redone last year, but now whenever it rains, water gets behind the gutters and runs down the fascia. The gutters weren't changed when the roofing was installed. What would cause this problem, and how do I fix it?

**"dodsworth" replies:** The roofers should have arranged the first course of shingles so that they hang over the gutters far enough to drip into them. In areas exposed to high winds, a plastic or aluminum "starter strip" is installed for this purpose. Call the roofers back and see if they will make amends as a courtesy.

**Tom Silva comments:** It's true that the roofing should stick out beyond the roof deck so that rain falls into the gutters and stays off the fascia.

The drip edge, a metal strip along the bottom edge of the roof, should project beyond the fascia by about 1 1/4 inches (I leave a gap of about 1/2 to 3/4 inch between the fascia and the drip edge's lower leg so that water will drip clear.) The first row of shingles—the filler course and the starter course on top of it—should overhang the drip edge by another 1/2 to 3/4 inch. That adds up to an overhang of about 2 1/2 inches, enough for rainwater to find its way into the gutter.

To solve the problem now, tuck a flat strip of flashing behind the gutter and under the drip edge until the strip touches the underside of the roof sheathing. Secure the flashing to the fascia with 1-inch aluminum



I found this device in my father's old tool chest. I'd like to know what it's called and what he used it for.

Susan Jones,  
Carleton, Mich.

FOR THE ANSWER  
SEE PAGE 106



These little suckers are leaf-footed bugs, a type of stinkbug that is relatively harmless to plants.

trim nails. Seal the gap between the flashing and the gutter's back lip with a bead of caulk.

**"JRuby2004" asks:**  
**What are these bugs?**

Does anyone know what kind of bugs these are? The other day, I found them clustered on a tree leaf in my yard here in North Carolina.

**"stephen9750" replies:** Those are leaf-footed bug nymphs.

**Roger Cook comments:** Yep, that's the bug in its nymph, or newly hatched, form. Although these bugs do feed on plant juices, they don't usually cause major problems to plants in your area.

These are placid, slow-moving creatures, but that doesn't mean you should treat them roughly or try crushing them. As members of the stinkbug family, they're going to emit a foul odor.

**"marooshka" asks:**  
**Should I remove crumbly old wallpaper?**

We want to replace the three layers of old textured wallpaper in our entryway and stairway. We asked several wallpaper hangers for estimates, and each one gave us a different opinion. One guy said it all had to come down but that it would be easy because it's all paper. Another guy said our walls would crumble if the wallpaper came off. He suggested sanding the old paper, then priming and covering it with more paper. What should we do?



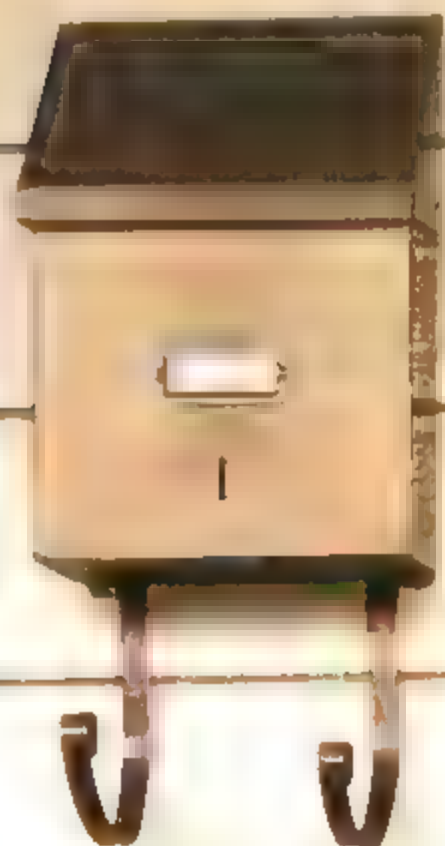
**"ordjen" replies:** Your first guy is probably correct in thinking that the old paper will readily

soak off. It's only in the past 30 or so years that manufacturers started routinely coating wallpaper with plastic to retard water absorption.

I think that steam would cause



# GOES PLACES NAILS AND SCREWS WOULDN'T DARE



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the least damage to your old plaster and woodwork. Years ago I removed uncoated paper using a commercial steamer.

If the plaster is in such poor shape that removing the paper would damage it, it probably needs attention anyhow. But if the plaster sounds firm when you knock on it, it's probably still in good shape.

It's difficult to estimate the costs of projects like this. However, your contractor should be able to give you a worst-case scenario b.d. Then you could pay him his day rate plus any materials he needs—an arrangement known as a time-and-materials contract—with that bid as the upper limit. As a contractor myself, I occasionally work on this basis when the extent of the job is not certain at the outset. It gives a measure of protection to both me and my customers.

**Norm Abram comments:** Removing the wallpaper would be my choice as well, and protecting the woodwork throughout the process is very important. That's especially true for wood sealed with she-lac, which does not tolerate moisture.

The plaster will require some preparation to receive new wallpaper, regardless of its current condition. Unless the wall is cracked or gives under pressure—signs that the plaster has lost its bond to the lath—I would not be too concerned about it; most plaster can be reattached to lath.

A “high limit” bid is a good idea for the contractor who repairs the plaster, but a contractor who only strips and hangs wallpaper should give you a straight bid.

**“moneypitter” asks:**  
**What’s causing the smell that’s running us out of our home?**

We just installed an HVAC system that’s fitted with an electronic air cleaner and a germicidal UV bulb. Ever since, my wife and son have complained from time to time about a bleach smell. I pick it up during periods of rain or high humidity, when the

smell is overwhelming to the point of burning my eyes. My dealer says he has no idea what’s causing it. Can anything be done about it?

**“bdigioia” replies:** We had the same issue for months. Finally, our AC guy made one simple fix. He turned off the electronic air filter. He called the smell, “ozone.” Sure enough, as soon as he turned off the filter, the smell went away. Try turning off your system for a day to see if the odor goes away.

**Richard Trethewey comments:** Many electronic and ultraviolet-based air cleaners emit ozone as they work, but if they’re sized and adjusted properly to match the system’s airflow, there should not be a noticeable smell. A cleaner that’s too big or an air-flow that’s too small is likely to cause a bleach-like smell. Call in an HVAC technician who’s familiar with your system; he or she ought to be able to determine what’s causing the problem and the best way to fix it.

**“garym” asks:**  
**Any tips for installing fiber-cement siding?**  
I plan to install fiber-cement clapboard siding on a house I’m building. I’ve put up



ANSWER  
HOLLOW AUGER

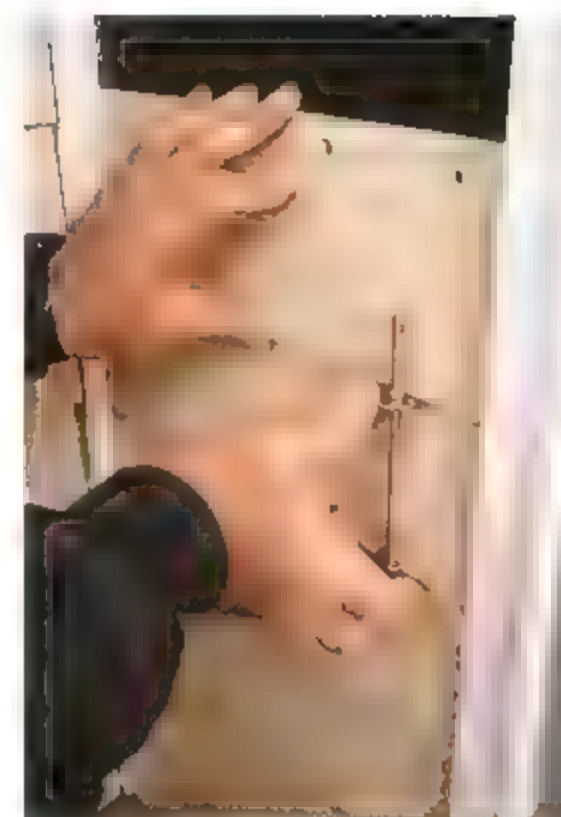
This specialized bit, when fitted into a bit brace, was used to make the round tenons found on stair balusters, table legs and chair parts. The auger can be adjusted to make tenons of different diameters.



vinyl siding before, but never a product like this. What advice does anyone have for hanging fiber cement?

**“WalterP” replies:** When we put up cement siding on our house, I needed a way to make sure the clapboards were evenly spaced. So I made a couple of spacer gauges out of 10-24 threaded rod, and washers and nuts. I set the washers to the exact spacing I wanted, then tightened two nuts against the sides of each washer to hold it in place.

Using the spacers was a piece of cake. Working with my wife, I hooked the washer on the bolt’s head under the bottom edge of one end of an installed clapboard, and rested the bottom edge of the next clapboard on the other washer. My wife did the same thing on her end with her spacer. Then we screwed the new board in place against the sheathing. Everything came out nice and even.



A homemade spacer gauge ensures that clapboard siding is installed evenly.

## ask his oldhouse

**Tom Silva comments:** Using a spacer like this is faster and a lot more accurate than using a tape measure to set the exposure for every board. Just keep in mind that you may need to make small adjustments as you go so that the siding lines up neatly with the top and bottom of window trim; such adjustments can easily be done with this little device.

As for general installation tips, I would strongly recommend that you work with a helper the way that “WalterP” did. Fiber cement is heavy, so it’s hard for one person to handle in long lengths.

Also, you’ll need a circular saw fitted with a blade designed to cut this hard material. But because any saw cuts in fiber cement generate a lot of dust, make sure to wear a mask and, if you can, hook up the saw to a wet-dry vac to keep as much dust out of the air as you can. It’s not healthy to breathe this stuff.



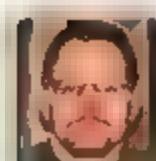
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"77bf29harris" asks:  
**How do I match new pavers with old ones?**

In 2004, I purchased sandstone-colored concrete pavers for a driveway and walkway. I recently purchased more pavers of the same color to extend the driveway, but the new ones are a shade darker. Is there a way to match the color or get it close to the originals?



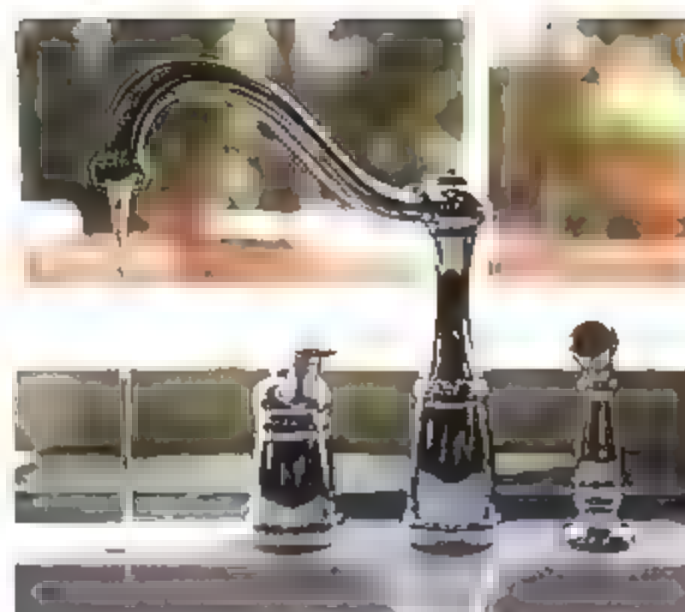
"sabo4545" replies: It's likely that the old pavers have faded over time with exposure to the sun, rain, and snow.

You could pull up some of them and mix in the new ones with the old ones so that you don't have one area that contrasts jarringly with the other. The new pavers will fade with time, and eventually they should all match pretty closely.

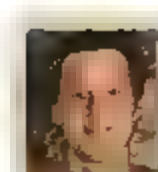
**Roger Cook comments:** Matching the color of existing pavers that have weathered for any length of time is next to impossible. And flipping over the pavers to expose the unweathered faces isn't likely to work because paver bottoms are usually different from their tops. You'll have better luck placing the new ones randomly among the old ones, as "sabo4545" suggests, and waiting for them to fade.

"HydePark" asks:  
**Why is the water flow from my kitchen faucet so poor?**

The water pressure is fine throughout my 99-year-old house except at my kitchen faucet. Whether the water is hot or cold, I don't get much volume. Oddly, the flow from the sprayer seems normal. Any suggestions?



Low water flow out of a kitchen faucet may be the result of a plugged or faulty diverter, a device located near the base of the spout that directs water to the spray hose.



"canuk" replies: Chances are, the problem is caused by the diverter, which controls water flow to the spray hose.

To get at this piece, take off the spout. You'll see at its base a white plastic piece with two slots on top; that's the diverter assembly.

To remove it, place a quarter (not a screwdriver) into the slots and turn counter-clockwise. Take it to a hardware store and get a matching replacement. Install it and reassemble the faucet.

**Richard Trethewey comments:** When a diverter goes bad, you'll notice one of three things: not enough water at the faucet spout, not enough water at the spray hose, or crazy hammering when the spray hose is used.

You can try removing the diverter and cleaning it, but if that doesn't work, your best bet is to replace it.

"mbgammill" asks:  
**How do I fix my concrete steps?**

The top layer of our front concrete steps is literally crumbling away. Someone said the damage was caused by snow-melting salt. Neighbors with the same problem tried to skim-coat over the damage themselves, but I notice that their repairs are already falling apart. Is it worth calling in the pros?

"jkirk" replies: If you decide to patch the damage, you'll need to chip away the bad areas using a hand sledge and a cold chisel, a hammer could chip and send a piece of metal flying. Once you get down to good, sound concrete, you can patch it. But it may be just as easy to jackhammer the whole thing and replace it.

**Tom Silva comments:** My guess is that you'll be better off replacing the steps

because any patch you or a pro put on is eventually going to fail.

To avoid this problem with your new steps, stay away from deicers, the water they create soaks into the concrete and can break it apart during freezes. Better to shovel off the snow when possible and spread sand or ashes over the ice to make it less slippery. ■

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✓Yes



✓Yes



xNo



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes

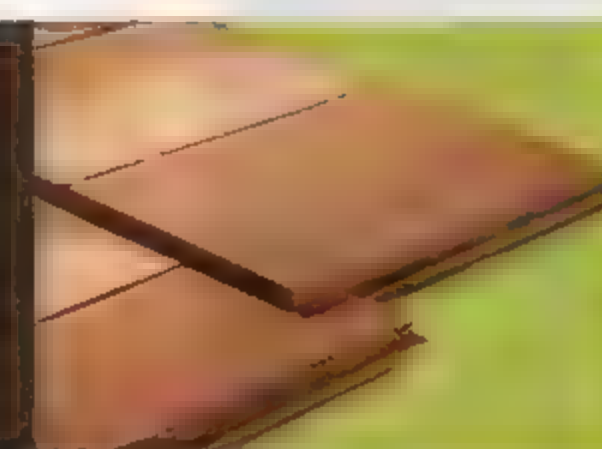
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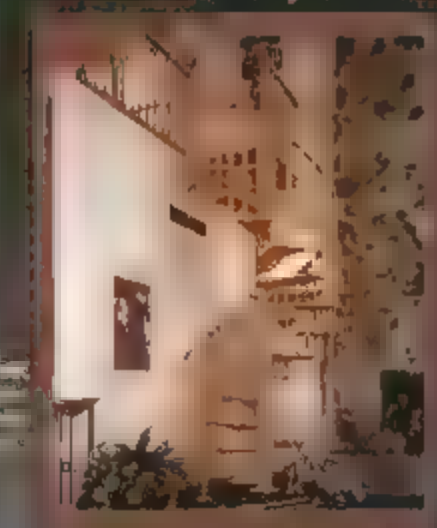
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**The history:** When my parents, the late Jack and Thelma Gillette, moved from Minneapolis to my

mother's hometown of Greenwood, Mississippi, back in 1949, they bought this wonderful Queen Anne on the Yazoo River. My three siblings and I had a great time growing up here, enjoying huge birthday parties on the wraparound porch. One of my fondest memories is of my father walking around with a brass bucket of coal, lighting fires in all the old fireplaces—every room has one.

**Why save it?** It's a great house, built in 1905 by Stage Marye, one of Greenwood's wealthiest landowners. He outfitted the place with only the finest features, including solid-oak millwork and beveled-glass doors. All the original details, including a beautiful butler's pantry with built-in cabinetry, are still there.

**What it needs:** The 5,177-square-foot house remains in our family, but my siblings and I are unable to restore it. We're looking for someone who will want to bring back its original beauty. The failing roof, which has caused some water damage, needs replacing, as does the outdated wiring and plumbing. We hope whoever buys our family home will make memories as sweet as ours there. —JOSEPHINE GILLETTE SPICER



1. The house, built to resemble a Mississippi River showboat, is part of a National Historic District. 2. The porch roof supports a second-floor terrace. Its missing railing must be replaced. 3. This oak mantel remains, but the mirrored-over firebox needs new masonry. 4. Classical columns frame the front porch. 5. Josephine recalls dancing with friends to Elvis records in this sunny front parlor.

**Got a house?** If you know of an old house that should be saved and is for sale, write to This Old House, 135 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020 or [savethisoldhouse@timeinc.com](mailto:savethisoldhouse@timeinc.com).



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